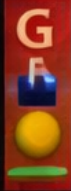


- RELIQUIAE TENEBRAE -

- SPECULAE DISTORTAE -

PROJECT ANGELBOOK - VOLUME XII - PART 12

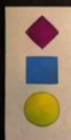


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EZEKIEL REDIK YARBROUGH

Reliquiae Tenebrae – Speculae Distortae
– Project AngelBook – Volume XII – Part
12

By Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough (DBM
ECLIPZE)

Liminal Archivist's Note

On the Preservation of Distorted Gnosis and the Dying Digital Veil

There is a strange ache that comes from spending all day in the ruins of spiritual memory.

Fifty books made in one day—an inhuman output—should feel like a triumph. But when the source material is splintered, hostile, and drenched in egoic inversion, what remains is not pride... but hollowness.

This volume, like many in this phase, is not composed of my own words.

It is an act of preservation, not expression.

It is a documentation of liminal knowledge, scraped from a dying web—the final breath of spiritual forums, parapsychology ephemera, early occultist blogs, and yes, even the darker corridors of modern satanic movements.

And herein lies the tension:

Much of what is presented under the name Satanism is a distorted half-truth.

It correctly identifies that Yahweh is not the Most High, and in this way, it mirrors certain Gnostic insights—

but then it derails into ego exaltation, materialism, and psychic hostility. It gets halfway to freedom... and then builds a new prison out of flame and shadow.

And yet—

amidst the mockery, venom, and inversions,

there are real spiritual technologies embedded in the code.

Meditation techniques, psychic development maps, astral awareness, breath control, and ritual frameworks.

Not all of it is corrupted.

Some of it is usable tech.

Some of it may be ancient... wearing a new mask.

So I do not endorse what is preserved here.

But I also refuse to let it vanish into untraceable digital decay.

This is an act of containment as much as curation.

I name this phase liminal, because I know it will not last.

There is only so much of the old internet left to preserve.

Only so much unindexed gnosis hiding behind broken blog links and .org forums that haven't been cached since 2012.

When this phase ends, and I return to creation, I will draw from this tomb of fragments with clarity and discernment.

But for now, I am the one who stands in the gateway—

Archiving the bones, sealing the jars, lighting one gold-lettered candle above a chamber of shadows.

To the reader: proceed with awareness.

This is not scripture.

This is sediment.

It is archived because it is dangerous.

And dangerous knowledge, when preserved with respect, often becomes a mirror for deeper truth.

—Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough

Liminal Phase – Discretio Luminis

most beautiful room in the building," retains most of the original decorative elements and furnishings from when the Oriental Institute was completed in 1931. Of particular note are the "Lotus" Window in the south wall, with its Egyptian-style design, the wood carvings on the north wall, and the elaborately painted ceiling. Overlooking the Reading Room is the Minstrel's Gallery, which now houses the periodicals collection. In recognition of generous support for the Oriental Institute Legacy Campaign, the Research Archives Reading Room is named

THE ELIZABETH MORSE GENIUS READING ROOM

The Oriental Institute has made a substantial commitment to complete the holdings of the Research Archives in the fields represented by the scholarship of its faculty and staff. To this end, individual volumes and complete runs have been (and continue to be) purchased to complete our holdings in serial and periodical publications. With holdings of over 40,000 volumes, the Research Archives is a unique resource for the study of the Ancient Near East.

Opening Hours / Access / Contact

The Research Archives is open to faculty, staff and members of the Oriental Institute; and to students in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. All others desiring to use the Research Archives are expected to enroll as members of the Oriental Institute. Information on membership is available in the lobby of the Research Archives, at the Suq in the Museum lobby, or from the Membership office (Room 233). Hours of operation during the academic year are:

Monday-Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday-Friday

Saturday-Sunday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

9:00 am - 8:00 pm

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Hours during interim periods and holidays are changeable. Those who plan on using the Archives during interim periods and holidays, and those who are coming from out of town to use the Archives at any time throughout the year, should call ahead to confirm that the Archives will be open. The phone number is (773) 702-9537. The Research Archives staff may also be contacted by Fax at (773) 702-9853.

The On-Line Catalogue

The computer catalogue of the Research Archives contains entries for materials catalogued in the library since 1987, and complete analytics (essays, articles and book reviews) for materials catalogued since 1990. The catalogue also includes earlier

materials, and retrospective cataloguing of the entire collection will ultimately make all Research Archives materials accessible. At present, the Research Archives on-line catalogue contains over one hundred and fifty thousand entries, searchable through a library database program.

Guide to the Location of Books / Journals

The Research Archives uses a simple system of organization. There are eight categories of books. The category of a book can be determined on the basis of the call number in the left hand margin of the card catalogue entry or listed under "Call#" in the on-line catalogue.

MONOGRAPHS

No call number

Shelved alphabetically by author / editor in the New Wing.

JOURNALS

Call#: J / XXX / 99

Shelved alpha-numerically by call number in the south room of the upper level.

SERIES

Call#: S / XXX / 99

Shelved alpha-numerically by call number in the built-in cases in the reading room, and in the two banks of free-standing stacks, also in the reading room.

PAMPHLETS

Call#: pam

Filed alphabetically by author in the file cabinets in the New Wing.

REFERENCE

Call#: ref

Shelved in various places: On the south wall of the Staircase room (modern language dictionaries, Bibliographical materials), on the western folio case (Egyptology, Cuneiform languages and NW Semitic languages), and in the hall stacks on the upper level (Islamics, Encyclopedias, Bible translations).

OVERSIZE

Call#: f

Shelved alphabetically on the West Wall of the New Wing.

FOLIO

Call#: Folio Z-99

Shelved alpha-numerically by case and shelf number in the folio cases. Please ask for help in locating folios.

MAP

Call#: map

Located in the Map Room on the upper level.

In summary, monographs, pamphlets and oversize are shelved in the New Wing, reference, folios, and series are shelved in the Reading Room, journals and maps on the upper level.

[GO TO THE RESEARCH ARCHIVES HOME PAGE](#)

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Welcome to the On-Line Catalogue

The Research Archives of the

Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

[Introduction](#)

[Opening Hours / Access / Contact](#)

[The On-Line Catalogue](#)

[Guide to the Location of Books / Journals](#)

[Introduction](#)

The Research Archives of the Oriental Institute is a non-circulating collection of books and other publications relating to the ancient Near East for the reference and research of Oriental Institute faculty, staff, students and members. Its materials span the history

of the ancient Near East from prehistoric times through the Late Antique period and reflect the interests and work of its users and benefactors.

In 1970 the library of the Oriental Institute was moved to the Joseph Regenstein Library and integrated with the newly consolidated collections of the University of Chicago Libraries. The faculty and staff of the Oriental Institute, feeling the need for a reference collection both more extensive than that provided by even the best of private collections maintained by members of the faculty and staff of the Oriental Institute, and more accessible than the university library system, decided to consolidate the various bibliographical resources available in the Oriental Institute.

The Research Archives, as this collection was called, opened in the Autumn of 1972. At that time the collections included the Director's Library (being primarily the private library of James Henry Breasted [Egyptology and general Near Eastern studies]); the Seele library [Egyptology, Archaeology]; the Edgerton library [Egyptology, Demotic and Greek Papyrology]; and remnants of the Megiddo field library [Syro-Palestinian Archaeology]. Since its founding, the Research Archives has benefited from the donation of important collections including the libraries of John Hadley [Assyriology]; Richard T. Hallock [Assyriology, Elamology]; Michael B. Rowton [Assyriology, Syro-Mesopotamian Studies]; Charles F. Nims [Egyptology], and Linda Ricketts [Demotic and Greek Papyrology]. In addition, many other individuals have made important contributions of individual titles or small collections, notably the Anna Bruce Mackenzie Memorial Collection [general Near East; Travel; Exploration].

The Research Archives is housed in the former quarters of the old Oriental Institute Library. The Reading Room, which was described by James Henry Breasted as "the most beautiful room in the building," retains most of the original decorative elements and furnishings from when the Oriental Institute was completed in 1931. Of particular note are the "Lotus" Window in the south wall, with its Egyptian-style design, the wood carvings on the north wall, and the elaborately painted ceiling. Overlooking the Reading Room is the Minstrel's Gallery, which now houses the periodicals collection. In recognition of generous support for the Oriental Institute Legacy Campaign, the Research Archives Reading Room is named

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NELC (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations)

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NEWS AND NOTES (Quarterly Institute Membership Newsletter)

ANNUAL REPORTS

--- Oriental Institute Travel Programs ---

Future Departures

Wonders of Ancient Turkey: The Lands of the Hittites, Lycians, and Carians, with an optional 3-day extension to the museums of Berlin - September 5-21, 2006

Call the Membership Office (773) 702 9513 for more information!

Previous Departures

Ancient Egypt & Libya, with an optional extension to Prehistoric Art sites in the Libyan Desert - March 9-26, 2006

Hatshepsut to Hearst: Ancient Near Eastern Collections of the San Francisco Bay Area, Escorted by Professor Peter Dorman — January 20-22, 2006

The Wonders of Ancient Egypt - March 3-19, 2005

The Museums of Paris and Berlin- May 6-16, 2005

"Petra: City of Stone" at the Cincinnati Art Museum - January 15-16, 2005

Hidden Treasures of Eastern Turkey: September 27 - October 15, 2004

"The Quest for Immortality: Treasures from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo", at the Milwaukee Public Museum - May 1-2, 2004

The Oases of the Western Desert - March 11-28, 2004

The Oriental Institute's Iran - April 13-30, 2002

The Oriental Institute's Egypt - March 7-23, 2002

Aphrodite, Cleopatra, and Other Mediterranean Beauties - May 18 to June 3, 2001

Egypt, 2001 - February 1-17, 2001

Eastern Turkey and Black Sea Adventure - May 26 to June 11, 2000

Egypt Revealed: An Exclusive Tour of Ancient Egypt - February 18 to March 4, 2000

Gods, Saints and Kings: Discovering Central Anatolian Turkey - September 4-20, 1998

The Oriental Institute's Iran - April 2-20, 1998

Turkey: Ottoman Treasures and Mediterranean Gems - October 12-26, 1997

Perfect Egypt - November 1-14, 1997

From Alexandria to Amman: The Red Sea and the Rose City - March 6-23, 1997

Fort Worth: Assyrian Reliefs - January 26-28, 1996

Wonders Of Egypt And Cruising Lake Nasser - February 4-18, 1996

Syria: The Fertile Crescent - March 11-25, 1996

2002-03 Annual Report

1997-98 Annual Report

1996-97 Annual Report
1995-96 Annual Report
1994-95 Annual Report
1993-94 Annual Report
1992-93 Annual Report
1991-92 Annual Report

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Links To Resources
RECOMMENDED READING ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTIONS
EGYPT AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST WEB RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
AND TEACHERS

Materials Available For Purchase

The following materials are available for purchase in person, by mail, or by phone from the Oriental Institute Museum gift shop, the Suq. Prices listed do not include tax or

shipping and handling. To order, please call the Suq at 773-702-9509.

The Oriental Institute: Its Collection and Its Work

This 20-minute video cassette provides an overview of ancient Near Eastern history and culture as represented in the collections of the Oriental Institute Museum. \$14.95

Art Projects Manual

This manual of arts and crafts inspired by artifacts at the Oriental Institute Museum contains ten high-interest projects adaptable for elementary or high school use. Patterns and complete instructions are included. \$12

Voyage to the Past

A Coloring Book and Guide to the Oriental Institute Museum

This 32-page book features line drawings of selected objects from the galleries of the Oriental Institute Museum, an alphabet of hieroglyphs and a map of the ancient Near East. \$3.50

RETURN TO MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAMS

RETURN TO MUSEUM

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ORIENTAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH ARCHIVES

RECOMMENDED READING ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST
A Guide to Introductory Readings on the Ancient Near Eastern World
A Collaborative Production of
The Research Archives of the Oriental Institute

The Oriental Institute Museum

The Oriental Institute Museum Education Program

Recommended Reading is a guide to introductory readings on the peoples and cultures of the ancient Near East. Some of the material included here (Ancient Mesopotamia) was originally published as the Resource Guide included with one of the three volumes (Life in Ancient Egypt, Life in Ancient Nubia, Life in Ancient Mesopotamia) of the Guides for Teachers Based on the Collections and Resources of the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago (Chicago, 1996), produced by the Museum Education Program with the generous support of a grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation. We have made some additions and corrections, and slightly altered the structure of that Resources Guide for the purposes of providing this information on-line, and we expect to add additional material as needed. The Egyptian and Nubian lists have been developed by Emily Teeter in the course of many years of teaching and lecturing and will change as new material is published. In addition, we are planning to add more lists as we identify topics of interest to the public. We welcome your suggestions. This on-line version was coordinated and processed into HTML by Charles E. Jones, and is a publication of the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute.

If you purchase any of these or other books by following this link to Amazon or Barnes and Noble a portion of your costs will go to support the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute.

Scout Report for Social Sciences Selection

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ANCIENT EGYPT

General Reference Books

Books for Students

Egyptian Religion

Hieroglyphs and Egyptian Literature

Mummies and Mummification

Art: Composition, Themes And Theory

Art: Sources For Specific Chronological Periods

1. Predynastic and Archaic Periods

2. The Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period

3. The New Kingdom

4. Post New Kingdom Art

Building and Construction Techniques

ANCIENT NUBIA

General Reference Books

For Younger Readers

ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

General Information

Archaeology

First Cities

The Invention Of Writing

Literature

Math And Measurement/Science And Inventions

Law And Government

Religion

Architecture

Daily Life

The Role Of Women

Warfare and Empire

Additional Indexes are under development

There is already a vast quantity of material relating to the ancient Near East available on-line. You will find a convenient index to these sources in the Abzu Project of the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute. In addition, the Argos Project allows for speedy searches of a large variety of on-line sources relating to the ancient Near Eastern, Classical, and Medieval worlds. In the box below, type the word you wish to search for, and press the enter key on your keyboard.

If you purchase any of these or other books by following this link to Amazon or Barnes and Noble a portion of your costs will go to support the Research Archives of the Oriental Institute.

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THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLLECTIONS
BY REGION AND SUBJECT

VISIT THE VIRTUAL MUSEUM

MUSEUM HOURS AND ACTIVITIES

The Oriental Institute Museum is a showcase of the history, art and archaeology of the ancient Near East. An integral part of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, which has supported research and archaeological excavation in the Near East since 1919, the Museum exhibits major collections of antiquities from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, Syria, Palestine, and Anatolia.

HIGHLIGHTS BY REGION

Anatolia
Assyria
Cyprus
Egypt
Iran
Mesopotamia
Palestine
Syria

HIGHLIGHTS BY SUBJECT

Animals
Boats
Clothing: Representations of
Combat
Daily Life
Deities
Funerary Objects
Games and Sports
Industry
Inscribed Material
Jewelry
Kings
Men
Metal
Mummies
Music
Pottery
Ritual Objects
Seals and Weights
Tools
Women

Visitors to the Museum are given a glimpse into the fascinating world of ancient man. Three millennia of civilization in the ancient Near East saw the rise of mighty nations in Egypt, Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Iran. Smaller kingdoms, too, left traces for the archaeologists. To see the artifacts left by these people is to look back at the beginnings of some of mankind's most fundamental endeavors. Sculptures and relief carvings depict the people themselves, as well as their gods and goddesses. Monumental statues proclaim the glory of their kings. Clay tablets, papyrus scrolls and inscriptions on stone show the development of their writing systems and document many aspects of their lives. Objects used in daily life display their skill in decorative arts and reveal the refinement of their tastes.

Unlike many more widely known museum collections, whose objects were acquired by purchase, the majority of the artifacts in the Oriental Institute Museum were found as a result of archaeological excavations sponsored by the Oriental Institute. These excavated artifacts have an additional and special importance, not only because they are known to be authentic, but also because scholars gain scientific and historical information from the circumstances of their discovery. This knowledge adds immeasurably to the collection's scientific value and to the quality of exhibitions in the museum.

This document highlights objects chosen to illuminate some of the more interesting and important aspects of ancient Near Eastern civilizations. The information it contains is only a brief glimpse into those complex and fascinating cultures, and is intended as an enticement to you to dig deeper into the world of ancient man.

Revised: March 19, 2004

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ORIENTAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH ARCHIVES

Egypt and the

Ancient Near East

Web Resources for Young People and Teachers

A project and publication of

The Research Archives of the Oriental Institute, Chicago

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For Students
Egypt
Ancient Near East
Non-Egyptian Mummies
For Teachers
Education Service Pages
Egypt
Ancient Near East
Maps
What's New

TIP: USE YOUR BROWSER'S "FIND" COMMAND TO HELP YOU FIND A
PARTICULAR TOPIC
Sites for Young People
Sites about Egypt

Amsterdam History Projects
(Ms Hos-McGrane's Grades 5 and 6 social studies classes)
Egypt
Ancient Maths including:
Egyptian Numerals
Sumerian and Babylonian Numerals

The Ancient Egypt Site
This attractive and colourful site is compiled by Jacques Kinnaer, a Belgian Egyptologist.
The History of Ancient Egypt
Including pages on each period of Egyptian history from the Early Dynastic to the
Graeco-Roman Period
Saqqara including:
Topography, with maps
Historic overview
Archaeology
Main Field
Djoser, Gisir el-Mudir, Great Enclosure, Hotepsekhemwi, Ninetjer, Sekhemkhet, Teti,
Unas, Userkaf, Western Massif
Saqqara South
Djedkare, Ibi, Pepi I, Pepi II, Shepseskaf, Nemtimsaf I
From A to Z keyword list and glossary
Bibliography an extensive listing
Ancient Egypt World Wide information and links to Museums, Societies and Web Sites

Ancient Sites

Walking Tours including:

Walking Tour of Ancient Saqqara

Ashmolean, Griffith Institute

For Young People including the following

A story set in ancient Egypt Chariot to Heaven by Mary Anne Bradley

Answers to questions you might have FAQs for kids

BBC On-Line

Medicine Through Time

Prehistoric Medicine

Trephining

Egyptian Medicine

Mummies

Bound for the Tomb

Egyptian Surgery

Bech, Sussi and Frank Madsen

A comic-book story

The Adventures of Nofret The "Home of Nofret, Minoan Princess and Danish Comics Character"

British Museum

Department of Egyptian Antiquities

Further Information Index

Time, Eternity and The Year

Kings, Periods and Dynasties

Egyptian Names

Map of Ancient Egypt

and links to many Answers to frequently asked questions

The Roxy Walker Galleries of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology with lots of links to pages on various aspects of Egyptian funerary beliefs and practices

Michael C. Carlos Museum

Odyssey On-Line An on-line journey to explore ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures. This site is aimed at 6th graders and includes this site on:

Egypt which has pages on:

Archaeology

Daily Life

Death and Burial

Myths

People

Writing

Videos and Books About Egypt

Have some fun with these Egyptian games:

Amulet Matching Game

Crack the Coffin Code

Find the Pharaoh's Fragment

Locate the Lotus

Papyrus Puzzler

Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Life in Ancient Egypt

Orientation

Chronology

Natural World

Daily Life

Religion

Funerary Customs

CCER - Centre for Computer-Aided Egyptological Research

Find the Pharaoh's Name! This is a wordsearch puzzle hiding the names of famous Egyptian pharaohs.

Download "The Trumpet of Tutankhamun" for information, pictures and the sound of the trumpet from Tutankhamun's tomb. [System requirements: To be able to run the program you need an IBM-compatible PC with Microsoft Windows 3.1, 3.11, 95 or NT, and... a sound card! The program size is 836 KB.]

Cleveland Museum of Art

Rosetta Stone A fun site for children about the land of the Pharaohs which includes the following:

Quiz

Ask the Mummy answers to frequently asked questions about ancient Egypt

Book list

An ancient Egyptian coloring book

Build a Pharaoh

Fact or Fiction (brief descriptions of ancient Egyptian topics)

Cyberkids (this is an on-line magazine for children)

Learn about Ancient Egyptian beliefs and then try the

Pyramid crossword puzzle

Cyber Mummy "Unlock the secrets of a mummy with the help of modern medical imagery, a supercomputer, and an archeologist."

This site includes a movie of a CAT-scan of the mummy (requires QTVR/AVI or MPEG plug-ins):

"Mummy Movie"

Discovery Channel

Tomb Tales: read about the latest discovery in the Western Desert

Cleopatra

The Search for Cleopatra's Palace

Mummy Game Introduction

Mummy Game

Discovery School

Cleopatra's Palace

Cleopatra's Palace Game

Viewing Guide

hieroglyphs

Alexander the Great

Build a Tomb

Byzantium

Egypt World

A large, colourful site on all aspects of Egyptian culture and history put together by three high school students for ThinkQuest 1998 (an international academic competition for students aged 12 to 19).

Guardian's Egypt

On-line Tour of Egypt

"Have you always wanted to GO to Egypt? Now here's your chance without leaving your computer!!"

Live satellite images of Egypt updated every three hours

Kids' Section!

History Channel

Tomb of the Pharaohs Game

Hunterian Museum, Glasgow

Egyptian Exhibition. This site isn't really aimed at kids but has large-print text, lots of pictures and is fairly accessible to younger people.

The Journeyman Homepage- lots of photos with journals of trips to Egypt

A Journey From Cairo To Aswan

Luxor Revisited

The Funerary Chapel of Ka(i)pura, Saqqara, Egypt

3D reconstruction of an ancient Egyptian tomb chapel

Louvre

Egyptian Antiquities

Mark Millmore's Ancient Egypt

This attractive site surveys the history and culture of ancient Egypt, with menus on:

Pyramids and Temples

Kings and Queens

Hieroglyphs

The Mining Co.

Guide to Ancient and Classical History by N. S. Gill - links to pages on the ancient world created by grade schoolers.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

World Mythology

Mythology of Ancient Egypt

Isis

Mummies

Thoth

Downloadable Resources including the following audio files:

The Story of Isis

The Story of Osiris

Museum of Fine Art, Houston

Splendors of Ancient Egypt exhibition: For Kids!

National Geographic Television

Mummy Index

Mummy Quiz

P. S. Neeley's Egyptian Games for Windows

Senet

Hounds and Jackals

20 Squares

Newton's Apple (TV Show)

Show 1301 Mummies information about ancient Egyptian mummies: how and why they were made

Nova Online: "This Old Pyramid" and "This Old Obelisk"

Transcript of "This Old Obelisk"

Transcript of "This Old Pyramid"

Pyramids -- The Inside Story

the pyramid of Khufu (Cheops, also known as the Great Pyramid)

the pyramid of Khafre (Chephren)

the pyramid of Menkaure (Mycerinus)

the Sphinx

Introduction to Egypt's Pyramid Age

History of Giza

Interview with Zaki Hawass, the Director of Giza

Who Built the Pyramids?

Follow the Excavation

Hieroglyphs: Say What? Learn about Egyptian writing!

Scaling the Pyramids Discover more about the pyramids, including:

Build a Scale Model of the Great Pyramid

Resources

Map of Egypt

Map of the Giza Plateau

Map of the bakery (the excavation)

Video fly-by of the Giza Plateau

O'Brien, Alexandra

Death in Ancient Egypt

Oriental Institute

Recommended Reading on Life in Ancient Egypt Annotated by Oriental Institute

Museum Associate Curator Emily Teeter
Recommended Reading on Ancient Nubia Annotated by Oriental Institute Museum
Associate Curator Emily Teeter

Le Ramesseum

Temple de Millions d'Années de Ramsès II à Thèbes-Ouest. A site full of information and images of Ramesses II's funerary temple and his tomb, including a virtual Ramesseum with computerized reconstructions.

English, Français.

The Royal Ontario Museum

The Faces of Djed A CT-scan of a ROM mummy illuminates a life from ancient Egypt

Fun Stuff A whole site full of fun things to read and do including:

Ancient Egyptian Quiz

Virtual Dig Out

Write Your Name in Hieroglyphs

Make Your Own Mummy

Popular Reading List for Ancient Egypt

Make Your Own Relief

Toronto Star: Interactive with the Royal Ontario Museum

Egyptian Hieroglyphs

Hieroglyph Translator How to write your name in hieroglyphs

Scriptorium

Odyssey in Egypt . Take part in a dig in Egypt on-line! This site is designed for 6th, 7th and 8th graders.

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

The Pharos Lighthouse of Alexandria

modern reconstruction

The Great Pyramid of Giza

SIRA

Autopsie d'une momie, slide show of a mummy autopsy

Splendors of Ancient Egypt from the St. Petersburg Times

"Splendors of Ancient Egypt" A selection of artifacts from the 2,800-year rule of the pharaohs

Postcards From Egypt A gallery of photographs and words by Times Travel Editor

Robert Jenkins

Riddle of the Sphinx Check your knowledge of all things Egyptian

Extra Credit A study guide on the lives, times and lands of the ancients:

Egypt: Geography

Egypt: Daily Life

Religion of Ancient Egypt

Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt

The Step Pyramid of Djoser

Explore the complex with this clickable plan

The University of Illinois Mummy Project

Mummy Video, a Macintosh QuickTime file (4.8 MB)

Think Quest

Welcome to Ancient Mediterranean History!

Egypt

Egyptian Time-Line

Origins and Religion

Successions and Dynasties

Kings

Wild Egypt: an on-line safari for all ages!

A Nile Journey

An Overland Adventure

A Red Sea Dive

Sites about the ancient Near East

Children's Books on the Ancient World A Selective Bibliography

This page is maintained by Diane Arnson Svarlien and has reading suggestions on Mythology and Literature, History, Biography, Historical Fiction, Nonfiction, Civilization, Near Eastern, Biblical, Archaeology and Software amongst others. Most of it is Greece/Rome related but there is some Near Eastern material.

Le Village Virtuel: Le Village Emmaüs

Bulletin bi-mensuel du Village Emmaüs - une banlieue de la ville d'Antioche dans la province romaine de Syrie, vers l'an 80 sous le règne de l'Empereur Titus. Bimonthly newsletter from the village of Emmaus, a suburb of Antioch in the Roman province of Syria, in the reign of Titus.

Avec des pages aux sujets suivis: Architecture, Commerce, Culture, École, Église, Géographie, Histoire, Jeux, Politique, Religion, Société, Vie quotidienne et Lexique - Grec, Français et Latin.

Michael C. Carlos Museum

Odyssey On-Line An on-line journey to explore ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures. This site is aimed at 6th graders and includes the following:

Greece

Near East with pages on Myth, Religion, Death and Burial, Archaeology, Writing, People and Daily Life

Rome

Detroit Institute of Art

Persepolis and Ancient Iran

Mesopotamia

Focus on Mediterranean Civilizations

Civilizations and Cities of Ancient Anatolia (Turkey)

Ancient Anatolian Civilization

Ancient Sites of Anatolia including: Ephesus, Miletos, Didyma, Priene, Side, Catal

Höyük, Shapinuwa

Ancient Sites of Jordan including: Petra, Jerash and Wadi Rum

More about:

Turkey
Egypt
Israel Antiquities Authority
Youth
Virtual Archaeologist
Quiz
View
The Story of a Site
The Story of an Artifact
Archaeology News
Israel Museum
Archaeology
Louvre
Ancient Near Eastern Antiquities
The Mining Co.
Guide to Ancient and Classical History by N. S. Gill - links to pages on the ancient world created by grade schoolers.
KidSat at NASA (kids exploring the earth through satellite images):

The KidSat Exploration Homepage
The Not-So-Lost City of Ubar. Learn about this ancient Arabian city in Oman with the team that rediscovered it.
The Seven Ancient Wonders of the World
Metropolitan Museum of Art
The Glory of Byzantium
Art Gallery
Themes in Byzantine Art
History
Timeline
Glossary
Teachers Resources
Minneapolis Institute of Arts
World Mythology
Cross-cultural Comparisons of Mythological Themes
Downloadable Resources including the following audio file:
The Story of Nebuchadnezzar
P. S. Neeley's Games for Windows
The Royal Game of Ur
Newton's Apple
How do Archaeologists know where to dig?

Nova Online: The Lost City of Ubar
Remote Sensing
Desert Finds
Artifact Gallery

Map

Interview with the excavator

Oriental Institute

Recommended Reading on Ancient Mesopotamia Annotated by Carole Krucoff, head of the Oriental Institute Museum Education Department, with the assistance of a panel of teachers from the Chicago Public Schools

Royal Ontario Museum

Virtual Dig Out Explore the ancient Near East via this frames based site!

Archaeological Analysis: Pieces of the Past This page explains the job of the archaeologist

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

excavated palace remains in Babylon

reconstruction of the "Vaulted Building" where the gardens may have been

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus

modern reconstruction

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus

modern reconstruction

older, less accurate Reconstruction

Non-Egyptian Mummies

BBC Horizon Programme notes and additional information, including several shows on ice mummies

Frozen in Heaven

Transcript of the TV show

Information on making "Frozen in Heaven"

A Life in Ice

Transcript of the TV show

Information about the making of "A Life in Ice"

The Ice Maiden

Transcript of the TV show

Information on making "The Ice Maiden"

Discovery Channel

Mummies in the Mist - Chachapoya Mummies in the Peruvian Andes

The Mountain Institute

Ice Maiden

National Geographic

Ice Treasures of the Inca

Nova On-Line

Ice Mummies of the Inca

Mummies of the World

Museum, Organisation and Society Home Pages for Young People

British Museum
Young Friends of the British Museum
Print, fill out and mail the application form!

Metropolitan Museum of Art
FAQs for Kids on:
The Museum's Collections
"What is the most looked at work of art in the Museum?" (The Temple of Dendur!)
"How was the Temple of Dendur moved from Egypt?"
"Who is William the Hippo?"
Sites for Teachers
Education Service Pages

These sites include material relevant to most of the ancient Near East, however, most of these links are the home pages of museum education departments which only contain details of how to contact these departments. Teachers should also use the links above; I have not included this material below to avoid duplication.

Archaeological Institute of America
Current Projects
Outreach Volunteer Program
Resources for Teachers
On-Line Course Database (This material is post-high school level)
Search the Database
The Archaeological Museum Of Bologna
Education department
BBC
BBC Education On-Line Homepage
Medicine Through Time - Teacher Notes
British Museum
Education Service

Michael C. Carlos Museum
Office of Educational Programs
Odyssey On-Line A journey to explore ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures designed for 6th graders and including:
Egypt
Greece
Near East
Rome

Carnegie Museum of Natural History
Division of Education Homepage
Outreach Programs
Cleveland Museum of Art
Education including:

For Teachers

Detriot Institute of Arts

Educational Programs

lesson plans for teachers on Egypt including sections on: art, language arts, math and science, mummies and social studies

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Education Index including:

Resources for Educators

Library of Congress

Exhibition on the Dead Sea Scrolls including:

Resources for Teachers

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Teacher and School Info

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Education Office

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Teaching the Arts

Art Adventure Program

World Mythology "On-line Curriculum"

Cross-cultural Comparisons of Mythological Themes

Downloadable Resources

World Mythology Slide Set and Player (requires StuffIt Expander)

Oriental Institute

Abzu Guide to Resources for the Study of the Ancient Near East Available on the Internet

Museum Education

Virtual Museum (QTVR)

Royal Ontario Museum

Fun Stuff including:

Educational Kits Provided By Outreach Services

Archaeology on the Internet

State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

The School Centre

School programmes

Ancient Near East

Library of Congress

Exhibition on the Dead Sea Scrolls including:

Resources for Teachers

Minneapolis Institute of Arts

World Mythology

Downloadable Resources including the following audio file:

The Story of Nebuchadnezzar

Oriental Institute

Recommended Reading on Ancient Mesopotamia Annotated by Carole Krucoff, head of

the Oriental Institute Museum Education Department, with the assistance of a panel of teachers from the Chicago Public Schools

Egypt

Material relating to Egypt can also be found in the more general sites above.

A&E; Classroom Materials

Show: "Mummies: Tales from the Egyptian Crypts"

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Show: "Nefertari: For Whom The Sun Shines"

Alexandria historical information on this Egyptian city from ancient to modern times including:

History Guide

Picture Gallery

Cairo historical information on this Egyptian city from ancient to modern times including:

History Guide

Picture Gallery

Michael C. Carlos Museum

Odyssey Online, a journey to explore ancient Egyptian culture designed for 6th graders: Egypt

Videos and Books About Egypt

Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Life in Ancient Egypt

Resources for Teachers

Teacher's Guide [This is a comprehensive guide to ancient Egypt including "detailed background information, a bibliography, a glossary, and a list of classroom activities" which will print out at around 17-25 pages in length, depending on your printer and font choice]

Detroit Institute of Arts

For Families with Young Children

Splendors of Ancient Egypt at the DIA

Lessons Plans for Teachers "A selection of cross-curricular lesson plans created by local teachers"

Art

Activities:

Fun with Hieroglyphs

Wall Relief Plaque

Make Your Own Canopic Jars

Language Arts

Activities:

Write Your Name in Hieroglyphs

Personal Pyramid

Maths and Science

Activities:

Egyptian Equation Quilt

Cubit Measures
Weather Journals
Mummies
Activities:
Mummy Case Drawing
Life-Sized Mummy Case
Model Miniature Mummies
Social Studies
Activities:
How Old is Old?
Investigating Ancient Egypt
Egyptian Market Day

The Field Museum of Natural History
Public Programs
Student/Teacher Programs

H-Net Reviews
H-Net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences is an online scholarly review journal
H-AfrTeach. The H-Net List for Teaching About Africa

Minneapolis Institute of Arts
World Mythology
Mythology of Ancient Egypt
Isis
Mummies
Thoth
Downloadable Resources including the following audio files:
The Story of Isis
The Story of Osiris
Nova Online
Transcript of "This Old Obelisk"
Teacher's Preview
Transcript of "This Old Pyramid"
Pyramids -- The Inside Story
the pyramid of Khufu (Cheops, also known as the Great Pyramid)
the pyramid of Khafre (Chephren)
the pyramid of Menkaure (Mycerinus)
the Sphinx
Introduction to Egypt's Pyramid Age
History of Giza
Interview with Zaki Hawass, the Director of Giza
Who Built the Pyramids?
Follow the Excavation

Resources

Map of Egypt

Map of the Giza Plateau

Map of the bakery (the excavation)

Video fly-by of the Giza Plateau

O'Brien, Alexandra

Death in Ancient Egypt

Oriental Institute

Recommended Reading on Life in Ancient Egypt Annotated by Oriental Institute

Museum Associate Curator Emily Teeter

Recommended Reading on Ancient Nubia Annotated by Oriental Institute Museum

Associate Curator Emily Teeter

Royal Ontario Museum

Reading List for Ancient Egypt

Scriptorium

Odyssey in Egypt Have your class take part in a dig in Egypt on-line (designed for 6th, 7th and 8th graders)

Program Summary

The Step Pyramid of Djoser

Explore the complex with this clickable plan

The World Art Treasures Www Server of the Jacques-Edouard Berger Foundation an image-based site including:

Berger, First Program (These pages contain lots of ancient Egyptian images.)

Pilgrimage to Abydos

Fayum Mummy Portraits

Lots of Egypt pictures which can all be turned into puzzles!

Maps

National Geographic Maps

Map Machine Atlas (maps, flags, facts and profiles of the countries of the world)

Africa click on the country name for close-ups and information (Egypt and Sudan)

Asia click on the country name for close-ups and information (Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen)

View from Above (satellite maps) including:

Middle East

Oriental Institute

Ancient Near East Map Series

Egypt-Nubia

Sudan-Nubia

Iran

Iraq

Levant

Syria

Turkey

University of Texas

Maps scanned from a huge collection. The following pages have links to many, many maps.

Links to maps of the Middle East

Links to maps of Africa

The Ancient World in the News

The Atrium

including two sites with links to the latest news stories relating to the ancient world:

Commentarium (news articles)

The Rostra (audio files)

*

Some of these pages have been extracted from Abzu (compiled by Charles E. Jones). They have been compiled here on a separate page for the sake of convenience (they were hard to find amongst all the entries in Abzu) and the entries have been expanded with some additions.

What's New

Click to receive email

when this page changes

SubmitSubmit

A Powered by NetMind A

This document went on-line on 5th February 1997.

August 10th

Addition of many links to the British Museum and especially to the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, with a now much expanded web-presence.

Links to ancient Near Eastern collections of the Detroit Institute of Art.

August 6th

Updated links to Young Friends of the British Museum.

Added World Art Treasures pictures of ancient Egypt which can all be turned into puzzles!

DIA tips page for families with young children.

July 20th

Links to Guardian's Egypt updated and link to Kids' Section added.

History Channel and Tomb of the Pharaohs Game.

Discovery Channel and Discovery School including several pages on Cleopatra and the discoveries in the sea off Alexandria.

Mummies in the Mist - Peruvian mummies on the Discovery Channel website.

Detroit Institute of Art education department's lesson plans on Egypt for teachers.

April 4th, 1999

The Ancient Egypt Site, Jacques Kinnaer's extensive site on the monuments and history

of Egypt.

BBC Schools programme "Medicine Through Time" website for students and for teachers.

The Mountain Institute with further information on the "Ice Maiden," Inca mummy.

Le Ramesseum, information and images of Ramesses II's mortuary temple and tomb.

Public and Education pages of the Field Museum of Natural History.

December 6th

H-Net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences, including H-AfrTeach. The H-Net List for Teaching About Africa.

October 6th

Egypt World from ThinkQuest 1998.

October 1st

Children's Books on the Ancient World A Selective Bibliography

September 21st

Mark Millmore's Ancient Egypt

State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg

Metropolitan Museum of Art Education Office

July 31st

Autopsie d'une momie. Slideshow of autopsy of a mummy.

Young Friends of the British Museum.

Metropolitan Museum of Art FAQs for Kids

Los Angeles County Museum of Art Teacher and School Info

June 3rd

Ancient World in the News via David Meadow's site The Atrium

Journeyman Homepage - photojournals of Egypt

Amsterdam History Projects by 5th and 6th Graders

On-line maps of the world from the University of Texas Library

Oriental Institute Ancient Near East Site Maps

Think Quest's Ancient Egypt site

May 7th

Focus on Mediterranean Civilizations with pages on Ancient Anatolia (Turkey), Egypt, and Jordan

Egyptian Antiquities and Ancient Near Eastern Antiquities in the Louvre

The Mining Co. Guide to Web pages producers by grader-schoolers on the ancient world

Israel Museum

April 3rd

Links to Royal Ontario Museum sites updated
March 20th

Le Village Virtuel: Le Village Emmaüs
Metropolitan Museum of Art: The Glory of Byzantium
February 18th

Israel Antiquities Authority
Wild Egypt, an on-line safari
The Funerary Chapel of Ka(i)pura, Saqqara
Ancient Sites walking tour of ancient Saqqara
February 6th

Reformatting of title and headings section. Addition of Recommended Readings on the Ancient Near East, with bibliographies for students on Egypt, Nubia and Mesopotamia and teachers Egypt, Nubia and Mesopotamia. Addition of Oriental Institute Map Series.

January 7th, 1998
Corrections made to various outdated links.

October 30th
Addition of Newton's Apple on "How do Archaeologists Know Where to Dig?" and Nova's site on "The Lost City of Ubar."

October 21st
Addition of Detroit Institute of Arts "Splendors of Ancient Egypt" Exhibition's Lesson Plans for Teachers.

September 18th
Addition of University of Illinois Mummy Project. Material from National Geographic including maps, and pages on Egyptian mummies and an Inca ice mummy.

June 9th
Addition of Cyber Mummy, the Splendors of Ancient Egypt site at the St. Petersburg Times and updating links within the Royal Ontario Museum site.

April 30th
Removal of A&E; Special Show on Mummies as it is no longer available. Additions: A&E; classroom materials for the shows on mummies and Nefertiti.

April 29th
Additions:
Carnegie Museum of Natural History including material on ancient Egypt for teachers and schoolchildren and links to the museum's Education department.

April 9th

Additions:

Tutankhamun's trumpet and "Find the Pharaoh's Name" puzzle from the CCER.
Updated links for Cleveland Museum of Art's Education pages.

March 15th

Changes in the design of the header and contents list

Additions:

Seven Wonders of the World (Great Pyramid, Hanging Gardens of Babylon, Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, Pharos, and Temple of Artemis at Ephesus), Clickable Plan of Step Pyramid and pages on Alexandria and Cairo

March 13th

Additions:

Argos search engine form

BBC Horizon homepage and programmes on Ice Mummies, further material on Nova "This Old Obelisk" and "This Old Pyramid"; Guardian's Egypt homepage and links to satellite images of Egypt and on-line tour of Egypt within that site; NASA's KidSat homepage and exploration sites on Ubar and the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

March 5th

Additions:

Minneapolis Institute of Arts homepage and much of the contents within the site, chiefly World Mythology

February 18th

Additions:

Cyberkids homepage, Ancient Egyptian Beliefs and Pyramid Crossword Puzzle

February 6th 1997

Additions:

Nova: This Old Pyramid site with links to much of the contents
Death in Ancient Egypt

Abzu is an Associate Site of the Argos search engine.

Type keywords in the box below to search other Ancient Near East related sites:

[Return to Abzu](#)

[Return to Oriental Institute](#)

[Return to Research Archives](#)

Revised: August 10th, 1999

Alexandra A. O'Brien

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http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/DEPT/RA/ABZU/YOUTH_RESOURCES.HTML

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/ED/kids.html>

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http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/INFO/UofC_Map.html

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2004 2005 2007

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DIRECTIONS TO THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

The Oriental Institute is located on the campus of the University of Chicago, in the southside Chicago community of Hyde Park, at 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637.

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM HOURS

MAP OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CAMPUS

Automobile Directions:

VIA LAKE SHORE DRIVE

VIA I-94 (Dan Ryan Expressway)

VIA I-55 (Stevenson Expressway)

VIA CHICAGO SKYWAY

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Transport Directions:

VIA CTA TRAIN/BUS FROM O'HARE AIRPORT

VIA OMEGA SHUTTLE SERVICE FROM O'HARE AIRPORT

VIA CTA TRAIN/BUS FROM MIDWAY AIRPORT

VIA CTA BUS FROM MIDWAY AIRPORT

VIA METRA TRAIN FROM DOWNTOWN

VIA LAKE SHORE DRIVE

1. Take Lake Shore Drive south, from downtown Chicago, to the 47th Street exit.
2. Turn right off the exit ramp onto 47th Street.
3. Drive west on 47th Street (under railroad tracks, and stop light beyond) to Woodlawn Avenue (a stoplight), and turn left.
4. Drive south on Woodlawn Avenue to 58th Street, and turn right.
5. Continue one block to 1155 East 58th Street (left side of street), at University Avenue.
6. See PARKING Recommendations.

VIA I-94 (Dan Ryan Expressway)

1. Take I-94 south from downtown, or north from Indiana, to the Garfield Blvd. (55th Street) exit.
2. Drive east on Garfield Blvd. through Washington Park, where Garfield Blvd. becomes 55th Street.
3. Continue east along 55th Street to Woodlawn Avenue, and turn right.
4. Drive south on Woodlawn Avenue to 58th Street, and turn right.

5. Continue one block to 1155 East 58th Street (left side of street), at University Avenue.
6. See PARKING Recommendations.

VIA I-55 (Stevenson Expressway)

1. Take I-55 east until it ends at Lake Michigan, exiting on Lake Shore Drive south.
2. Take Lake Shore Drive south to the 47th Street exit.
3. Continue west to Woodlawn Avenue (the third stoplight), and turn left.
4. Drive south on Woodlawn Avenue to 58th Street, and turn right.
5. Continue one block to 1155 East 58th Street (left side of street), at University Avenue.
6. See PARKING Recommendations.

VIA CHICAGO SKYWAY:

1. Take the Chicago Skyway north to the Stony Island exit, and continue north.
2. After 60th Street, turn left onto a divided boulevard, the Midway Plaisance.
3. At Woodlawn Avenue (the second stoplight), turn right.
4. Drive two blocks north on Woodlawn Avenue to 58th Street and turn left.
5. Continue one block to 1155 East 58th Street (left side of street), at University Avenue.
6. See PARKING Recommendations.

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. There is a 3-story Public Parking garage on 55th Street (Garfield Blvd.) at Ellis Ave. (stop light). This garage is free on weekends (parking costs run from 8:00am to 4:00pm weekdays).
2. Street parking is difficult to find around campus during regular University operating hours.

VIA CTA TRAIN/BUS FROM O'HARE AIRPORT

1. From inside O'Hare Airport, follow the signs "Trains To City".
2. Purchase a train ticket WITH A TRANSFER for the CTA bus.
3. Exit the train at either the Washington, Monroe, or Jackson Street stations in downtown Chicago, and proceed up to street level on Dearborn Street.
4. Walk one block east to State Street.
5. Take the Jackson Park Express CTA bus (Number 6) south to Hyde Park, which is on the south side of Chicago.
6. Get off the bus at 57th Street, adjacent to the Museum of Science and Industry.
7. Walk west on 57th Street for nine blocks to University Avenue.
8. Turn left, and walk one block to 58th Street.
9. The Institute is on the southeast corner, 1155 East 58th Street.

VIA OMEGA SHUTTLE SERVICE FROM O'HARE AIRPORT

1. From inside O'Hare Airport, follow the signs for Ground Transportation.
2. Ask an attendant where to board the Omega Shuttle to Hyde Park, on the south side of Chicago.
3. Exit the limousine at the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel stop, on the University of Chicago campus.
4. Walk one block north on Woodlawn Avenue to 58th Street.

5. Turn left, and walk one block to University Avenue.
6. The Institute is on the southeast corner, 1155 East 58th Street.

VIA CTA TRAIN/BUS FROM MIDWAY AIRPORT

1. From inside Midway Airport, follow the signs "Trains To City".
2. Enter the "Skybridge" which connects the airport with the CTA station, crossing Cicero Avenue.
3. Purchase a train ticket WITH A TRANSFER for the CTA bus.
4. Exit the train at the State/Lake station in downtown Chicago, and proceed down to street level on State Street.
5. Take the Jackson Park Express CTA bus (Number 6) south to Hyde Park on the southside of Chicago.
6. Get off the bus at 57th Street, adjacent to the Museum of Science and Industry.
7. Walk west on 57th Street for nine blocks to University Avenue.
8. Turn left, and walk one block to 58th Street.
9. The Institute is on the southeast corner, 1155 East 58th Street.

VIA CTA BUS FROM MIDWAY AIRPORT

1. From inside Midway Airport, follow the signs "Trains To City".
2. Proceed to the place where you purchase a CTA train ticket, which is located at the bus terminal for Midway Airport.
3. Take the Garfield Blvd. (55th Street) bus east (approximately 30-45 minutes) to Hyde Park on the southside of Chicago.
4. Get off the bus at University Avenue., and walk three blocks south to 58th Street.
5. The Institute is on the southeast corner, 1155 East 58th Street.

VIA METRA TRAIN FROM DOWNTOWN

1. From the Randolph Street Station, at Randolph Street and Michigan Ave., take the Metra Electric (ME) train south to the 57th Street stop. NOTE: ALL TRAINS STOP AT 57TH STREET.
2. Exit the station, turn right, and walk west on 57th Street for five blocks to Woodlawn Avenue.
3. Turn left, and walk one block south to 58th Street.
4. Turn right, and walk one block west to University Avenue.
5. The Institute is on the southeast corner, 1155 East 58th Street.

RETURN TO ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

RETURN TO ORIENTAL INSTITUTE - GENERAL INFORMATION

Revised: August 25, 2005

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http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/INFO/UofC_Map.html

http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/OI_Electronic_Resources.html

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2004 2006 2007

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| website navigational aid |

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

ABZU - Ancient Near East Resources on the Internet
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH ARCHIVES ON-LINE CATALOG
RECOMMENDED READING ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST
ANE - Electronic Discussion List

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS ON-LINE

The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Janet H. Johnson, editor

Electronic CHICAGO HITTITE DICTIONARY (e-CHD) - The P Volume

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OIS 1. Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Archaeological Perspectives. Donald Whitcomb, editor, et. al.

SAOC 38: The Demotic Verbal System, Janet H. Johnson

SAOC 45: Thus Wrote 'Onchsheshonqy - An Introductory Grammar of Demotic (Third Edition), Janet H. Johnson

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PDF Document: Excavations at Babylon -- L. W. King

The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs (2.41 MB)

(JSTOR) Volume 26:144:1915:244-245+248-250

This PDF article contains high-quality images ...

The capital of the Old Kingdom of Babylonia situated on the Euphrates River south of Baghdad in modern Iraq. The city was occupied from the 3rd millennium BC but became important early in the 2nd millennium under the kings of the First Dynasty of Babylon. The sixth king of this dynasty was Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC) who made Babylon the capital of a vast empire and is best remembered for his code of laws. This period was

brought to an end by the Hittites when in 1595 BC Babylon is sacked by King Mursili I. The city then had a mixed history until the Neo-Babylonian Period of the 7th-6th centuries BC. It once again achieved pre-eminence when Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) extended the Chaldean Empire over most of Western Asia. Babylon fell to Cyrus the Great of Persia in 539 BC; occupation continued in the Achaemenid Period. The city was taken by Alexander the Great in 331 BC. Babylon subsequently declined and was eventually abandoned after the Muslim conquest of AD 641 ...

Palace Ruins in BabylonThe site encompassed some 2100 acres and is probably the largest in southern Mesopotamia. Excavations by the Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft from 1899 to 1917 uncovered substantial remains of the time of the Neo-Babylonian Period: fortifications including a double gateway (Ishtar Gate) whose walls were decorated with molded reliefs of lions -- bulls -- dragons; and also many temples including Esagila or the Temple of Marduk with its ziggurat -- the biblical Tower of Babel ...

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Sumerian Waterways

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

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The Euphrates River

Sumeria's primary waterway

The Euphrates River flowed southeast from the Tarsus Mountains past the cities of Is and Sippar, then branched into three rivers to reunite just above Nippur from whence it flowed on past Kisurra, Shuruppak, Uruk and Enegi, before branching again at the delta to the Lower Sea (Persian/Arabian Gulf). Larak, Ur and Kuara (sometimes known as Kisiga) were located on the eastern branch.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Nippur, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Kisurra, municipal quay	33 miles	33 miles
Shuruppak, municipal quay	10 miles	43 miles
Uruk, Kullab Quay	28 miles	71 miles
Enegi, South Quay	2 miles	73 miles
Ur, municipal quay	40 miles	113 miles
Kuara, municipal quay	19 miles	132 miles

The Gibil Canal

flowed southwest from the Tigris River

The Gibil Canal flowed southwest from the Tigris River to a point south of the frontier city of Kesh, past a branch which went north to that city. The Gibil continued on to Apisala where it intersected with the Ninagina Canal which flowed southeast from Zabalam. From Apisala, the Gibil went on to Umma, where it joined the Iturungal Canal.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Entrance from the Tigris	0 miles	0 miles
Entrance - canal to Kesh	38 miles	38 miles
Apisala, municipal quay	14 miles	52 miles
Umma, municipal quay	10 miles	62 miles

The Isinnitum Canal

The Issinnitum Canal left the right bank of the Euphrates above Nippur to run by the city of Isin, and thence to rejoin the Euphrates at Kisurra.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
---------------	----------	------------------------

Nippur, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Isin, municipal quay	21 miles	21 miles
Rejoins the Euphrates	24 miles	45 miles

The Iturungal Canal Sumeria's secondary waterway

The Iturungal Canal left the Euphrates below Nippur to go southeast past the craft cities of Adab, Dabrum, Zabalam, Umma, Nagsu, Bad-tibira and Larsa before it flowed between the twin cities of Uruk and Enegi to rejoin the Euphrates.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Nippur, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Adab, municipal quay	30 miles	30 miles
Dabrum, municipal quay	5 miles	35 miles
KI.AN, landing	7 miles	42 miles
Zabalam, municipal quay	4 miles	46 miles
Umma, municipal quay	13 miles	59 miles
Nagsu, municipal quay	19 miles	78 miles
Bad-tibira, municipal quay	12 miles	90 miles
Larsa, municipal quay	16 miles	106 miles
Enegi, North Quay	14 miles	120 miles
Uruk, Eanna Quay	1 mile	121 miles
Uruk, Kullab Quay	3 miles	124 miles

The Lower Sea (also called 'The Bitter Sea' and 'Sea of the Rising Sun')

The Lower Sea is today known in Iran as 'The Persian Gulf' and in Arab countries as 'The Arabian Gulf.' In the 27th century BCE, the coastline of the Lower Sea was approx. 19 miles south of Ur.

The Nanagugal Canal from the Iturungal to the Lower Sea

The Nanagugal Canal, which departed from the left bank of the Iturungal Canal 7 miles downwater from Bad-tibira, marked the eastern boundary of Ur and the western boundary of Lagash.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Iturungal Canal, left bank	0 miles	0 miles
Kutallu, plantation quay	7 miles	7 miles
Lower Sea, coast	27 miles	34 miles

The Ninagina Canal
Sumeria's tertiary waterway
and the Sealand's primary waterway

The Ninagina Canal left the Iturungal at Zabalam and intersected with the Gibil Canal at Apisala to flow southeast through the Sealands, passing by the cities of Girsu, Lagash and Nina (sometimes called Sirara) on the coast of the Lower Sea. As the Ninagina's route was through marshlands, it was the canal most often used for smuggling.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Zabalam, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Apisala, municipal quay	16 miles	16 miles
Girsu, municipal quay	32 miles	48 miles
Lagash, municipal quay	5 miles	53 miles
Nina, municipal quay	14 miles	67 miles

The Susuka Canal
The way to the city of Eridu

The Susuka Canal was a wide, eleven-mile long canal flowing southeast from the city of Ur to the city of Eridu on a bay on the coast of the Lower Sea (Persian/Arabian Gulf).

The Tigris River
A natural barrier to mountain peoples

The Tigris River flowed southeast from the Tarsus Mountains, parallel to the Euphrates. The only Sumerian city serviced by the Tigris was Eshnunna which was actually on the Diyala River, but near its junction with the Tigris. The most important feature of the Tigris was that it served as a natural barrier to less civilized tribes and bandits living in the Hursag, the Zagros mountainlands of western Iran.

Although Sumeria was mostly desert, its waterways (like Egypt's) served as the highways of commerce. In the 27th century BCE, camels had yet to be introduced and overland transport was principally by donkeys ('asses' in the Bible). Ships and boats, moved vast tonnages of cargo along the Euphrates River and major canals and thence into the Lower Sea (the Persian or Arabian Gulf) for shipment to foreign lands.

As Sumer had virtually no natural resources other than water, mud, reeds and a few bitumen seeps, Sumerians were forced to trade with foreign lands to get the copper, timber and other raw materials needed to build their civilization. Large port cities like Uruk and Ur near the mouth of the Euphrates made Sumer one of the dominant powers in the ancient world.

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Sumerian Units of Measure

by James W. Bell

English Names	Sumerian Names	Equivalent Measures	Mathematical Relationships
------------------	-------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------

Measures of Length

Finger	Shusi	.67 Inch		
Cubit	Kush	20 Inches	=	30 Fingers
Reed	Gi	10 Feet	=	6 Cubits

Long Reed	Ninda	20 Feet	=	2 Reeds
Line	Esh	200 Feet	=	10 Long Reeds
Stage	Danna	10.8 Kilometers	=	1,800 Long Reeds

Measures of Area

Garden	Sar	376 Sq. Feet		
Field	Iku	0.9 Acre	=	100 Gardens
	Eshe	5 Acres	=	6 Fields
	Bur	15½ Acres	=	3 Eshe
	Buru	156 Acres	=	10 Bur
	Shar	936 Acres	=	6 Buru
	Sharu	9,400 Acres	=	10 Shar
	Shargal	56,400 Acres	=	6 Sharu

English Names	Sumerian Names	Equivalent Measures	Mathematical Relationships
---------------	----------------	---------------------	----------------------------

Measures of Capacity (Used In Uruk)

Sila	1 Liter	
Ban	10 Liters	= 10 Sila
Barig	60 Liters	= 6 Ban
Gur	300 Liters	= 5 Barig

Measures of Capacity (Used In Lagash)

Gin	0.025 Liters	
Sila	1.5 Liters	= 60 Gin
Ban	10 Liters	= 6 Sila
Barig	60 Liters	= 6 Ban
Gursag +gal	240 Liters	= 4 Barig

English Names	Sumerian Names	Equivalent Measures	Mathematical Relationships
---------------	----------------	---------------------	----------------------------

Measures of Weight

Grain	She		
Shekel	Gin	¼ Ounce	= 180 She

Mina	Mana	1 Pound	= 60 Shekels
Talent	Gu	60 Pounds	= 60 Minas

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[Sumerian Monetary Values](#)

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[Precious Metals](#)

There was no coinage in Sumer. Trading was done using standard or equivalent units of value. The most popular standardized unit of value was silver. Whenever the unit of value was not named, it was assumed to be silver.

For example, if a quoted price was 10 shekels, it meant 10 shekels weight of silver.

Prices quoted in copper (i.e., 10 shekels of copper) or gold (i.e., 10 shekels of gold) always named the metal.

Precious metal values were set by royal decree but it should be understood that, like produce prices and commodity prices, prices of metals varied widely in Sumer according to the amount imported (virtually all metals were imported into Sumer) and the political condition of the city-state..

Precious Metal Ratios in Ancient Sumeria

Historically, in Ancient Sumeria, precious metal ratios constantly changed (as they do today). but, in the 27th century BCE, the following ratios were approximately:

1 Shekel of Silver = 60 Shekels of Copper
1 Shekel of Gold = 12 Shekels of Silver
1 Shekel of Gold = 720 Shekels of Copper

Measures of Weight

Grain	She		
Shekel	Gin	$\frac{1}{4}$ Ounce	=180 Grains
Mina	Mana	1 Pound	= 60 Shekels
Talent	Gu	60 Pounds	= 60 Minas

Barley Units

Because of the salinity of the ground, barley was the single most popular agricultural crop in Sumer. As a result, it was the second most popular unit of trade. It had an equivalency value and was quoted and traded by capacity, that is, gurs of barley grain. (1 Gur of barley, about $8\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of barley, was worth 1 shekel of silver or, conversely, 1 bushel of barley was worth about 12 shekels of copper.)

Measures of Capacity

Sila	1 Liter	
Ban	10 Liters	= 10 Sila
Barig	60 Liters	= 6 Ban
Gur	300 Liters	= 5 Barig

Other Popular Equivalent Units of Value

Other popular units of value in Sumer included fish which were plentiful in the rivers and canals. They were traded by capacity. 1 Shekel (of silver) bought 1 gur (32 quarts) of 'mixed fish,' but only $\frac{1}{2}$ gur of 'good fish.'

Days of manual labor were also an equivalent unit of value and traded by number of days.

An ox-herd was paid 6 gur of barley a year, which works out to 5 liters of barley per day.

A Price Comparison

One shekel bought twelve pairs of leather sandals of average quality. Thus the price per pair of leather sandals (1 shekel of silver = 60 shekels of copper) was 5 shekels of copper.

Interest Rates in Ancient Sumer

Annual interest rates were 20% on silver loans and 33% on barley loans.

The End

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The Sumerian Calendar

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Sumerian Chronology

Sumerians numbered their years by the year of the reign of a king, i.e., 'in the third year of the reign of Lugalzaggessi,' etc. King lists were kept for dating prior reigns.

Years

Years consisted of twelve lunar months of 29 or 30 days. To keep the lunar year (354 days) in step with the solar year, the lugal (king) decreed the addition of an intercalary or extra month to the Sumerian calendar every three years or so.

In Sumerian times, the year began after harvest time, in September/October. Later, Babylonians moved the start of the calendar year to spring.

Seasons

Sumerians had only two seasons. The dry season, the growing season called 'emesh,' summer, began in February/March at the beginning of the year. The wet season, 'enten,' winter, began in September/October when the arrival of the rains.

However, the flooding of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers was a result of snow melting in the Taurus Mountains (in today's Turkey) and occurred in April and May.

Months

Sumerian months were strictly lunar and each month began at the first sighting of the new moon. Because there was no universal religion, there was no uniformity in the names of months between Sumerian cities. Months were often named for local feasts, events or agricultural activities. Scribes overcame the name problem by numerating the months, such as 'the fourth month,' etc., as is done in the Biblical book of Genesis.

Although Sumerian months were lunar, intercalated months were added when needed to keep the calendar adjusted to the seasons. This resulted in some years having thirteen months instead of the normal twelve.

For those interested in month names used in different Sumerian and Babylonian cities, and the associated rituals, feasts and festivals associated with them, [click here](#).

Weeks and Holy Days

There were no weeks in Ancient Sumeria. Holy days, time off from work, were usually celebrated on the first, seventh and fifteenth of each month. In addition to these holy days, there were also feast days which varied from city to city.

Days

The Sumerian day started at sunset (as in Genesis) and was twelve double hours long, six double hours of daytime and six double hours of nighttime.

Watches

A Sumerian day consisted of six watches, each being two double hours long.

Daytime Watches:

1st Watch	- Morning	8:00 AM - 12:00 AM
2nd Watch	- Midday	12:00 AM - 4:00 PM
3rd Watch	- Afternoon	4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Nighttime Watches:

1st Watch	- Evening	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
2nd Watch	- Starlight	12:00 PM - 4:00 AM
3rd Watch	- Dawn	4:00 AM - 8:00 AM

Hours

The length of Sumerian a hour actually varied by season (a daytime hour was one-sixth of the available daylight and so would be much longer in the summer than in the winter) but over a year, an hour averaged double the length of our present-day hours (120 minutes).

Because of its sexagesimal-based numbering system, the Sumerian double hour contained 60 minutes and the minute contained 60 seconds, the same as today.

Distance

Distance was measured in terms of how far a man could walk in a double hour and was called a 'beru.' One beru was about five miles (walking at a rate of 2½ miles per hour using today's hours).

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Temples and Ziggurats

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

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Ziggurats possibly owe their existence to early Sumerian temples being built on platforms. The land of Sumer was very flat and platforms would have raised the temples above the level of flood waters, keeping the temples dry when the rivers overflowed in the spring. For the picture of a temple built on a mud brick platform, click [here](#).

One of the more famous temples on a platform was the 'White Temple' in the city of Uruk, dated to 3000 - 3200 BCE. For a photo of the excavated ruin of this temple, click [here](#). For a picture of how the White Temple originally looked, click [here](#).

As a mud brick temple aged, its walls would begin to crumble and, eventually, it would

have to be rebuilt. When that happened, the old mud brick walls were piled down and piled on top of the old foundation to form a higher platform for the new temple. As the platforms grew higher and higher, they became stepped.

Although ziggurats look like the ancient stepped pyramids of the Egyptians, they were never used as funerary structures. Instead, these monuments, crowned with temples or shrines, were intended to serve as stairways for gods ascending to or descending from heaven.

Architecturally, ziggurats measured about 60 meters long (200 feet) x 40 meters wide (130 feet), an area that would occupy about one third of a modern city block. In height, they varied, ranging as high as 21 meters (70 feet).

To see a photo of an unrestored ziggurat, [click here](#).

To see a spectacular photo of the ruin of a ziggurat at Borsippa, [click here](#).

To see a photo of the partially restored ziggurat at Ur, [click here](#). To see a drawing depicting how the ziggurat at Ur might have originally looked, [click here](#).

Sumerian ziggurats had four stages but later Babylonian and Assyrian ziggurats often had seven. For the picture of a seven-stepped ziggurat, as in the Biblical Tower of Babel, [click here](#).

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RUINS OF THE WHITE TEMPLE

You can see that over the millenia the weathering of the temple has really made the bricks crumble. The drawing is a reconstruction of a once dominate piece of architecture. In the reconstructed drawing you can see the spiral effect differed from the Pyramids that used flat faces of rock . But while the Pyramids were a tomb for their Kings, the Ziggurat was used as an altar and sacrifice area.

CLICK HERE FOR THE PALACE OF KING ASHURNASIRPAL

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King Ashurnasirpal

Ashurnasirpal II

(884-860? B.C.).

Ashurnasirpal conquered considerable territory and helped to create a more centralized state.

He was king of ancient Assyria, but features of this palace are similar to those of Sumer.

Click here to see a MOVIE of the King's Palace

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About this capture

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CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ZIGGURATS.

CLICK HERE IF YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT SUMERIAN SCULPTURE.

CLICK ON MAP TO SEE THE AREA THAT THE SUMERIANS LIVED.

CLICK ON BIBLIOGRAPHY TO SEE A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY.

CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO THE STUDENT DIGITAL ART PAGE TO SELECT OTHER PROJECTS.

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Page1.htm>

38 captures

7 Mar 2002 - 28 Aug 2007

Dec AUG Sep

28

2006 2007 2008

About this capture

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Doug1.HTM>
15 captures
12 Feb 2002 - 23 Aug 2007
Sep AUG Sep
23
2004 2007 2008

About this capture

This temple was erected at Uruk in the Sumerian culture of Sumer, probably around 3000 B.C. The Ziggurat itself stood on a brick terrace, formed by the construction of successive buildings on the site. It turns out however that the bricks that the Sumerians used were not very durable. After years of weathering the White Temple has begun to crumble. The top was reached by a staircase, which included three different entrances (the main one was the southern side). The temple measured 22 x 17 meters. Access to the temple was through three doors, the main located at its southern side.
[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE RUINS OF THE ZIGGURAT AND THE RECONSTRUCTED PLAN OF ONE](#)

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Doug1.HTM>

15 captures

12 Feb 2002 - 23 Aug 2007

Sep AUG Sep

23

2004 2007 2008

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Doug2.HTM>

13 captures

20 Feb 2002 - 24 Aug 2007

May AUG Sep

24

2006 2007 2008

About this capture

RUINS OF THE WHITE TEMPLE

You can see that over the millenia the weathering of the temple has really made the bricks crumble. The drawing is a reconstruction of a once dominate piece of architecture. In the reconstructed drawing you can see the spiral effect differed from the Pyramids that used flat faces of rock . But while the Pyramids were a tomb for their Kings, the Ziggurat was used as an altar and sacrifice area.

CLICK HERE FOR THE PALACE OF KING ASHURNASIRPAL

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/PAGE3.HTM>

14 captures

8 Feb 2002 - 22 Aug 2007

Oct AUG Sep

22

2004 2007 2008

About this capture

The Sumerians' art and sculpture was mainly focused on the world around them, in particular animals. These two pieces are sculptures of bulls with very intricate detail, corresponding with the more worldly views of the Sumerians. These figures' most important feature is the life-like detail found in the beard of the ram. Also anthropomorphism is seen in the human-like expressions and mannerisms. The bull is very fanciful, yet delicate at the same time.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW MORE SCULPTURE

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Doug3.HTM>

14 captures

08 Feb 2002 - 24 Aug 2007

Jul AUG Sep

24

2006 2007 2008

About this capture

Reconstructed lyre consisting of a wooden sound-box with a gold head of a bearded bull at its end, from the graves at Ur, 2500 B.C.

It is thought that writing was made to keep track on people's possessions. As writing evolved, pictures gave way to lines pressed into clay with a wedge tip. By 3,000 B.C., the script evolved into a full syllabic alphabet.

This lion came from the later Sumerian period, where the lion and hundreds of other small lions guarded the gates into the city.

The small statue that represented the gods that the people worshipped had dominate features such as the large animated eyes and more human like features.

Sumerian art in general uses spiral forms, a playful nature such as the harp box, and its own type of idealism as seen in the Abu dolls. It uses both human and animal forms in order to give many different effects that art at that time period did not use.

CLICK HERE TO SEE A STATUE OF A RULER.

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Page2.htm>

5 captures

21 Sep 2003 - 26 Aug 2007

Jul AUG Sep

26

2006 2007 2008

About this capture

Gudea, perhaps the most notable of Mesopotamian rulers, has had many religious texts and statues preserved. Gudea also built many temples for his gods. This statue depicts Gudea in worship. The relaxed eyes and calm pose emphasize his power. Sumerian cuneiform is found on the back of the statue. This form of writing was created by the Sumerians. The writing describes the building of a temple for the goddess Geshtinanna.

[CLICK HERE OR ON THE PICTURE OF GUDEA TO RETURN TO FIRST PAGE.](#)

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/Page1.htm>

38 captures

7 Mar 2002 - 28 Aug 2007

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28

2006 2007 2008

About this capture

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[CLICK ON BIBLIOGRAPHY TO SEE A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY.](#)

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12 captures

10 Jan 2003 - 18 Sep 2004

Jul SEP Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

[About this capture](#)

The Sumerians located in the Mesopotamian area in order to utilize the resources of Tigris and Euphrates rivers. As you can see on the map they are in close proximity to Ur, Uruk, and Babylon, where the Sumerians mainly resided.

[CLICK HERE TO GET BACK TO THE FIRST PAGE](#)

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/Units/Upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/PAGE1.HTM>

38 captures

07 Mar 2002 - 28 Aug 2007

Aug SEP Oct

07

2003 2004 2005

[About this capture](#)

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13 captures

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19

2004 2007 2008

About this capture

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<http://www.upenn.edu/museum/Collections/mesopotamia.html>

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<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/ABZU.HTML>

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<http://pubpages.unh.edu/~cbsiren/sumer-faq.html>

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21 captures

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18

2005 2007 2008

About this capture

Projects in Art History:

Janice Kurbjun '02 on William Blake

Pat Jacobs '99 on Hieronymous Bosch

Tom Reardon '02 on Titian

John Debruckier '03 on Raphael

Ed Shaw '99 on Brunelleschi

Liz Palmer '01 on Braque

Irene Barrett '02 on El Greco

Greg Waterman '00 on Mantegna

Dan Erstad '00 on Masaccio
Rebecca Allen '00 on "The Last Supper"
Martha Kelley '03 on "Sheeler"
Sean Kennedy '02 on Andrea del Verrocchio "
Allison Hathway '01 on "Leonardo da Vinci"
Brett Carty '00 on Domenico Ghirlandaio
Taryn Streich '00 on Stonehenge
Doug Hitchner '00 and Ian Wallace '01 on Sumeria
Alicia Wetmore '03 on The Pyramids of Egypt
Lydia Haas '00 on Ancient Egyptian Jewelry
Casey Degen '01 on King Tut
Meredith Jacobs '00 on the Palace of Minos
"Lichtenstein" by Vanessa Sordoni, '03

Flash Projects:

"Floating Like a Butterfly" by Julia Crawford, '03
"Project Ed" by Kurt Miller, '05
"FX45" by Rocco Imperatrice, '03
"Dunk and Dance" by Brian Muir, '03
"The Game" by Zubin Alema, '02
"Olive" by Graham Partridge, '02
"Jump" by Tracy Orne, '03
"Halloween" by Lindsay Burns
"Bounce" by Avery Morse, '03
"Name" by Avery Morse
"Soldier" by Avery Morse
"Dance" by Avery Morse
"Desert Tours" by Nicholas Morris, '05
"In House Flight School" by Andrew Heier
"Gambling Fish" by Brian O'Neill, '04
"Dance Lesson" by Ashley Johnson, '03
"Baseball Movie" by Eric Minnick, '05

Chris Pope's Videos - Bryce 3D, Poser, Flash:
(Download may be slow, but worth the wait)

"Skateboarder"
"Soar"
"Soar2"
"Circle"
"Fight"
"N Club"
"Talking man"
"Through the hoops"

Illustrator Projects:

"Porsche" by Zubin Aleemo, '02

"Landscape" by Graham Partridge, '02

Photoshop Projects:

"The Project" by Pearson Snyder, '00

"Images" by Jarrett Fennell, '03

"Turntable Madness" by Graham M. Partridge, '02

"The Day The World Went Away" by Graham M. Partridge, '02

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/adigital.htm>

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Mar AUG Sep

18

2005 2007 2008

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Doug Hitchner '00 and Ian Wallace '01 on Sumeria

Alicia Wetmore '03 on The Pyramids of Egypt

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"The Game" by Zubin Alema, '02
"Olive" by Graham Partridge, '02
"Jump" by Tracy Orne, '03
"Halloween" by Lindsay Burns
"Bounce" by Avery Morse, '03
"Name" by Avery Morse
"Soldier" by Avery Morse
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"Desert Tours" by Nicholas Morris, '05
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"Fight"
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"Turntable Madness" by Graham M. Partridge, '02

"The Day The World Went Away" by Graham M. Partridge, '02

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20 captures

22 Feb 2002 - 17 Mar 2005

Sep MAR Apr

17

2004 2005 2006

About this capture

Hieronymous

BOSCH

Welcome to the Hieronymous Bosch Webmaze. (If you are downloading this, you ought to know that the animation below might take some time. But it'll be worth it.) Notice the picture of Hieronymous Bosch above- it's a link. Click on it if you want to find out more about the incredibly talented artist himself. If you wish to explore other aspects of his work, page down a bit.

This right section of the painting is the Garden of Eden. Bosch had many paintings of Jesus and the Bible, as was the custom of his time. Click here to view Bosch's heavenly creations.

The left section is a painting of hell. Bosch had a dark side, too. A very dark side. Click here if you want to see some messed up stuff.

The work above you is called a Triptych. The animation shows how it folds out, but if you want to learn more about this unique style of painting, I have gathered a few from Bosch's repertoire to help explain. Click Here.

<----Click on this picture of Michelangelo to see a startling comparison of the two artists.

References for this page

[Click Here to return to the Student Digital Art Page](#)

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Reardon/page/intro.htm>

14 captures

22 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

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About this capture

Titian
(c.1480-1576)

Pictures

Bio

Bibliography

Return to STUDENT ART page Made by Thomas Reardon in 2001

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/DeBruicker/Raphael.htm>

10 captures

10 May 2003 - 26 Sep 2004

Aug SEP Oct

26

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About this capture

Raphael

(1483-1520)

Raphael's art is the combination of numerous other Florentine qualities, introduced and used by Renaissance artists before and after him. He is the ultimate Florentine artist because of his will to experiment with the influence of others from his region and era.

Raphael's Biography

Artwork Table 1

Artwork Table 2

Bibliography

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by John DeBruicker,

28 February, 2001

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Brunelleschi/practice.htm>

11 captures
26 Jun 2003 - 26 Sep 2004
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About this capture
FILIPPO BRUNELLESCHI

The new architecture of the Early Renaissance was greatly influenced by Filippo Brunelleschi. He is thought to be the first architect to take precise measurements of the ancient buildings in Rome. Through this practice, he discovered linear perspective. Between 1417-1419 Brunelleschi found himself challenging Ghiberti for the design of the duomo of the Cathedral in Florence. Although his ideas were quite radical he won the job and his career took off. While polishing his designs for the duomo he was given the opportunity to build the San Lorenzo Church by the Medici family. He used his own designs using square units, which made up a choir, crossing, transept, nave, and chapels. His designs consisted of precision and order.

-Above and below are pictures of Brunelleschi's duomo on the Cathedral of Florence.

-Filippo Brunelleschi was born in 1377. He first tried his artistic talents in sculpting as did his architectural counterpart Donatello. Donatello and Brunelleschi apparently ventured to Rome in 1402 when they both lost an opportunity to make the Baptistery doors.

-During Brunelleschi's time in Rome he is said to have scrupulously studied the ancient monuments of Rome. Much of the exactness of his designs was derived from these studies as can be seen in the duomo of the Florence Cathedral above.

-To the right is the Pazzi Chapel in Florence designed by Brunelleschi.

-BIBLIOGRAPHY

-Comparison between Michelangelo and Brunelleschi.

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/LizPalmer/braquepage.htm>
10 captures
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2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Georges Braque was born on May 13, 1882 in Argenteuil, France, a small community located on the Seine River. Braque was influenced by art through his father and grandfather, who owned a house-painting firm and were amateur painters. However, Braque's artistic interest started when his family moved to Le Havre. Le Havre was an early center for Impressionism, home to artists such as Claude Monet and Eugene Boudin. The painting at the right, *Le Viaduct de L'Estaque*, shows the influence of Impressionism upon Braque.

In the spring of 1907 Braque exhibited six paintings in the Paris Salon des Independants. In this successful exhibition, in which all of his paintings were sold, he met his future art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. Through his art dealer's connection Braque met Pablo Picasso, his future co-collaborator in the style of Cubism. Braque considered his relationship with Picasso so strong as if they were roped alpinists. The painting to the right, *"Houses at L'Estaque"*, was painted in 1908 and is considered one of Braque's first analytical Cubist paintings, including characteristics such as slab volumes, sober coloring and warped perspective. Click on the painting to read more about its qualities.

Braque shows Renaissance art qualities in this painting *"Large Nude"*, which was painted in Paris in the spring of 1908. The use of primarily tan and green in the color scheme is similar to artist Paul Cezanne's landscapes. Cezanne was an early influence of Georges Braque. This painting also shows the influence of Picasso over the works of Braque. In 1907 Picasso painted *"Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)"* which portrayed five nude women who were fractured into angular shapes. *"Large Nude"* is also similar to Michelangelo's *"Libyan Sibyl"*, click on the painting to learn more.

In 1915 Braque was discharged from the French army because of a head injury. In 1917 he started painting again while living in semiseclusion. In his next phase of painting, Braque combined his experience with Cubism and the decorative aspects of painting. In the 1930's Georges Braque was internationally recognized as a still-life painter. The painting to the right, *"The Studio"*, was painted in 1939. The model for this artwork was Braque's studio in Varengeville, on the Norman Coast of France. Braque used the Flemish technique of natural daylight to illuminate the objects in his work place. The use of many vibrant colors is similar to Florentine artwork. Braque also created a pattern of both colors and shapes that is repeated inside the studio and outside in the sky. This painting, along with later works, are considered to be Braque's meditation on his works and surroundings.

"Candlestick and Playing Cards on a Table" was painted by Braque in the winter of 1909-1910 during the most abstract phase of Cubism named High Analytic Cubism, which lasted from 1910-1912. High Analytic Cubism allowed artists to break down forms and use colors such as grays, browns and blacks to overlap planes. This style of

Cubism is similar to Flemish artwork because of its rigid forms, subdued colors and sense of organized clutter. In the lower center of the painting, a thick piece of wood juts out, forming a large angle. In the back of the painting Braque painted the base of the brass candlestick. Right of the candlestick, Braque hid two playing cards, the ace of hearts and the six of diamonds. Braque used an oval canvase to avoid leaving the corners empty because High Analytic Cubism focuses on the center of the painting.

References created by Elizabeth Palmer, 2001

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11 captures
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26
2003 2004 2005

[About this capture](#)

El Greco, originally named Domenikos Theotokopoulos, was a prominent mannerist painter born in Crete. Few details are known of his early life, but it is assumed he studied painting in his native Crete before moving to Venice to further advance his studies around 1566. In Venice, El Greco trained under one of the great masters of the day, Titan. El Greco's later works reflect the Italian inspiration he received during his stay in Venice as well as when he ventured to Rome a few years later in 1570. During his stay, El Greco met several Spainards whom were affiliated with the church and entined the young painter to venture to Spain, first to Madrid and then Toledo in the spring of 1577. There in Spain El Greco made his home and created some of his greatest works, many of which still remain in his final homeland.

[El Greco's Early Works in Venice and Rome \(1569-1572\)](#)

[El Greco's Beginnings in Spain \(1577-1584\)](#)

[Spanish Master \(1586-1599\)](#)

[Bibliography](#)

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Created by Irene Barrett

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Project/AMpage.htm>

16 captures

22 May 2001 - 26 Sep 2004

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2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Andrea Mantenga was born near Vicenza, Italy in 1431. At the age of ten he came under the direction of a minor artist in Padua. He demonstrated signs of artistic genius at an early age, already able to accept commission at the age of seventeen and reaching artistic maturity in his twenties. Mantenga's paintings were clearly influenced by artists emerging from neighboring Florentine and it is likely that he had direct contact with Donatello.

Artistic Style-

- Mantenga's paintings demonstrated a combination of Florentine and Flemish qualities.

- Like Flemish artists he paid close attention to detail, particularly to anatomical correctness.

- He was a perfectionist in perspective.

- His human forms have a statuesque appearance.

- His paintings were often very dramatic.

- He had a passion for classical antiquity.

- His paintings always had a very crisp feel.

St. James Led to His Execution

Click to zoom in This is a reproduction of one of Mantenga's greatest paintings destroyed during a bombing in WWII. Like most of his works this painting is historically accurate and detailed. This detail is evident in both the soldier's armor and the large arch above. This detail is like Flemish art however unlike many Flemish paintings it is highly three dimensional. The Large monumental feel of the painting is also unlike Flemish art and makes the painting very dramatic.

This is a classic example of Mantenga's careful use of perspective. Planned to be

placed above a doorway the picture was given a worms eye view. The painting is also unusual in that it has two vanishing points, one through the arch and the other to the right side of the arch. The painting is divided horizontally into a bottom half consisting of the people and the top half consisting of the architecture. The flag emerging from the bottom connects these two halves.

This painting of St. Sebastian shows the great detail Mantenga put into his paintings through both the anatomical correctness of St. Sebastian and the detail in the surrounding architecture. This use of detail is similar to Flemish art though less crowded. Depth is created through use of the castle in the background and the two men in the foreground.

The form of St. Sebastian seems almost to be a statue because of its rigidity and crispness. This appearance is often described as seeming to have been banged out of steel. The contrapposto stance and Greek pathos connect it to classical statues and statues made by Donatello.

-Other artists' portrayal of St. Sebastian's execution
St. Sebastian

Click to zoom in

-Other paintings by Mantenga

-Web resources used in making this page

-Click Here to return to the Student Digital Art Page

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/Units/Upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Project/page2.htm>

8 captures

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2003 2004 2005

About this capture

These following pictures portraying the same execution of St. Sebastian from various artists bring an interesting contrast in style.

This painting by Botticelli depicts the same scene of St. Sebastian's execution with the obvious difference of personal style. Like Mantenga Botticelli shows careful attention to anatomical correctness in the form of St. Sebastian however the detail is not as dominating of a feature as in Mantenga's painting. With less emphasis on detail the picture appears less rigid. Also the background is of little significance in this painting making it less crowded and simplified. This helps bring focus on St. Sebastian. The expression on St. Sebastian's face and the feeling of the entire painting is less dramatic.

This painting by Perugino comes across as much more simple and natural than Mantenga's painting. The form of St. Sebastian, although anatomically correct is more flowing and relaxed because Perugino did not use the same hard details found throughout Mantenga's painting. He does however use the same contrapposto stance

and Greek pathos. The background shows an interesting similarity in the use of detail in architecture although it is more subtly used. This painting also is far more simple and less crowded than Mantenga's painting.

The Story of Saint Sebastian

Sebastian died a martyr in Rome, probably in AD 288. His tomb in the place named Ad Catacumbas on the Via Appia has been venerated at least as far back as the time of Saint Ambrose and probably had some connection to Milan.

Two hundred years after his death a legend sprang up about his life. According to this legend, Sebastian, a Christian, decided to go into the military during a time of persecution. This decision was not to save his own life, but in order to put himself in a position to comfort the martyrs, as he did with Mark and Marcellian. As a member of the military, the ones who captured and guarded the persecuted Christians, he was in ideal place to stay with them, encourage them, and even alleviate their sufferings without anyone being suspicious or keeping him out.

He showed such aptitude, however, in the military life, that the emperor Diocletian made him a captain without ever guessing Sebastian was a Christian. As more and more Christians died, it was inevitable that Sebastian would be found out. Diocletian was furious at what he saw as a betrayal after all he had done for Sebastian. He ordered Sebastian to be shot by archers.

Irene, a Christian, found Sebastian still alive and nursed him back to health. As soon as he could stand, Sebastian went looking for Diocletian. Sebastian didn't want revenge or a reprieve. He wanted to accuse Diocletian of all the cruelties he had committed. Diocletian had Sebastian beaten to death.

-Taken from the Iconography of Saint Sebastian. See- Bibliography

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About this capture

Masaccio was born in 1401 and was the first great painter of the Italian Renaissance. Born Tommaso Cassai in San Giovanni Valdarno, near Florence, Masaccio joined the painters guild in 1422. His use of mathematical proportion and scientific perspective distinguished his work from most of his contemporaries. Donatello and Brunelleschi used similar styles with their architecture, and together the three men

were the official founders of the Italian Renaissance.

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About this capture

The Tribute Money

- Tribute Money illustrates the story in the Gospel of Matthew
- Use of so called continuous narration
- Masaccio displays skill in merging weight and volume of his figures
- Use of contrapposto stance, life-like with weight on one foot

Madonna With a Child

- The lutes of the two angels display his skill in directional illumination
- Work is full of life, realistic and natural
- He relied upon his observation of nature
- Angels' shadows look natural and life-like

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About this capture

The Holy Trinity

- Masaccio was 24 when he painted the Holy Trinity
- Similar to Giotto's art with its great sculptural volume along with a large sense of scale
- Masaccio's figures are like "clothed nudes", with drapery on the bodies like real fabric
- Use of symmetry and linear perspective make the painting very balanced

Expulsion From Paradise

- Masaccio displays ability to show human body in motion
- Painting leaves little room for spacial setting, different from the setting space in the Tribute Money
- Masaccio uses the beauty and power of the nude human form
- The slopes of the background indicate the gate of Paradise

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About this capture

The Tribute Money and the School of Athens are both incredible

detailed works of art. Masaccio and Raphael use similar styles in the paintings, as follows:

- both employ the tool of contrapposto, or more realistic positions held by the characters
- the paintings both center on one or two figures who capture the light most predominantly
- there is a flow through the line of characters
- both have an architectural element in the background
- both have characters that stand out to add flavor to the paintings

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Florence Firenze Cappella Brancacci e Chiesa di Santa Maria del Carmine@Firenze.net

Biography

Frescoes in the Cappella Brancacci of Santa Maria della Carmine in Florence

Tribute Money

MASACCIO

JPEG image 1139x500 pixels

CGFA- Masaccio: Adam & Eve Expelled from Paradise

CGFA- Masaccio

CGFA- Masaccio: The Virgin and Child

Art Doctor, Masaccio
MASACCIO (originally Tommaso Cassai)
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About this capture

Dietric Bouts

The Last Supper, approx. 1467, oil on panel, St.Pierre at Louvain, Belgium
Dietric Bouts, (1420-1475) was born in the Netherlands and worked in Belgium where he was made city painter of Louvain. He painted mostly religious works and portraits. Like Rogier Van der Weyden, a contemporary Flemish painter of the same period, his paintings were very linear and reserved. Throughout this painting, he exemplifies qualities of a Flemish painter. Bouts most definitely took advantage of the domestic and intimate setting of the Last Supper itself, which already is a Flemish characteristic, and made heavy use of natural daylight. In most of his paintings, he used landscape as a backdrop. The natural, outdoor light pours in through the side windows and the back doorway. Using this light, Bouts was very skillful at using subtle coloring to shape the figures and give a sense of atmosphere. Though each face within the painting is somewhat similar, each is a miniture cameo portrait, very much like Flemish artists of his time. Each figure has crisp, angular folds to the drapery and somewhat rigid gestures, less flowing than those of Florentine painters. Also, as with Flemish paintings, there is an excruciating attention to detail. For example, one can clearly see the portrait in the background. One can see as well that Bouts heavily uses very earthy colors, such as brown and beige that are compartmentalized and do not blend into each other. There is also very little evidence of brush stokes.

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/rosselli.htm>

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About this capture

Cosimo Rosselli

The Last Supper, in Sistine Chapel

Cosimo Rosselli (1439-1507), was a painter of the Florentine school of painting. His greatest achievements were painting frescoes, such as the one he painted in the Sistine Chapel of the Last Supper. He had a high standard of craftsmanship rather than originality. Much like the rest of the Florentine artists, he used bright colors with natural lighting making a greater expanse of space in the painting. His attention to detail not only in the background but throughout the painting is almost Flemish, but most definitely includes more aspects of Florentine painting. There is a definite rhythmic composition and flow of movement, inherent in most Florentine representations of the Last Supper. There is also much use of linear perspective, as the painting centers around Jesus. In keeping with the idea of telling the story of the Eucharist visually, Judas is kept isolated from the rest of the disciples. One difference with this certain representation is the heavy use of gold. But coupled with the many bright colors, this aspect could not be considered Byzantine. The unique expressions of the disciples also suggests this painting's Florentine origin. TITLE>Duccio

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/Units/Upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/leonardo.htm>

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About this capture

LEONARDO DA VINCI

The Last Supper, Mural in Sta. Maria delle Grazie, Milan

Leonardo Da Vinci's (1452-1519) representation of the Last Supper is the first classical statement of any rendering of the Last Supper. It is one of the greatest examples of the ideals of High Renaissance painting. The first major quality of the painting is its major stability and perfection of linear perspective. He started thinking about the painting in terms of figure composition. The whole painting centers around Jesus, the central figure of the painting and the Eucharist. From this mindset, Leonardo achieved his goal of representing the story visually. This painting clearly exemplifies one of his writings in his notebook, in which he said the highest and most difficult goal in painting to be reached is to depict, "the intention of man's soul" through gestures and movement of limbs.

The central vanishing point controlling our view is behind Jesus's head. The back wall in the architecture of the room acts as a halo, having symbolic significance. If you were to cover up the upper third of the painting, the apostles would be less defined. The perspective makes the composition less static.

The emphasis on the individual can be seen by Leonardo's care to "type cast" the apostles. Judas has a dark, defiant profile. Though the disciples are crowded unrealistically, it draws attention to Jesus. As your eye scans across the picture, one can pick up on the unfolding drama of the Eucharist. Each disciple reveals his own personality in their reaction, displaying their relationship to Jesus. While each gesture is unique to each character, the gesture Leonardo chose for Jesus is most expressive. It is a submissive and offering gesture, hinting at the whole meaning behind the Eucharist and the revealing of the betrayer. Leonardo also chose a red cloak for Jesus that attracts one's eye to his central figure.

Leonardo chose, in expressing Jesus's central role in the Last Supper, to use gestures as a means by which to guide one's eye toward Jesus. This is seen through the rhythmic composition of the painting that functions through individual gestures to point toward Jesus, whose face he left unfinished, adding to the reverence he gave towards His divine nature.

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/delsarto.htm>

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About this capture

ANDREA DEL SARTO

The Last Supper, at Cenacolo of San Salvi in Florence, Italy

Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530) evokes a different kind of awe than his contemporaries.

He added a grace and grandeur through his painting in the convent through a greater sense of space. The enlarged scene of the Last Supper evokes more reverence than a focused painting might have. Painting like the Florentine painters, his heavy use of bright colors evokes a lively feeling expressed through the vivid movements and individualistic gestures of the apostles, and finally resting on the Jesus's calm, submissive figure.

Almost all of the figures point towards Jesus, directing one's eye to the center of the painting. A great sense of atmosphere is used by coloring the top of the painting and the background with a sky blue. That bright coloring is balanced with the brilliance of the disciples coloring and the bright red of Jesus's cloak. This painting is clearly monumental in its scale.

"...And he painted it in so good a style that his work was held to be, as it certainly is, the most smooth, the most vivacious in colouring and drawing that he ever did, or rather that

anyone could do. For apart from all the rest, he gave such infinite grace, grandeur, and majesty to all the figures that I do not know how to praise his Last Supper without saying too little, it being so fine that whoever sees it is stupefied. It is no wonder that, because of its excellence, during the devastations of the siege of Florence in the year 1529, it was allowed to be left standing, while the soldiers and wrecking squads, by command of those in charge, destroyed all the suburbs around the city, and the monasteries, hospitals and all other buildings. These men, let me say, having destroyed the church and the campanile of San Salvi, and started to tear down part of the convent, had reached the refectory containing the Last Supper when the man who led them, seeing and perhaps having heard speak of this marvellous painting, abandoned what they had embarked on and would not let any more of the place be destroyed, putting this off till they could not do otherwise". (Giorgio Vasari, 1568).TITLE>Franciabigio

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/franciabigio.htm>

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About this capture

FRANCIABIGIO

The Last Supper, at the Cenacolo della Calza

Franciabigio's representation of the Last Supper is very much like Ghirlandaio's, in that he includes a domed shape in the architecture of the painting. This rendering is less brilliant in color, but equally expressive. Each disciple has an individual expression and gesture that relates to the action of the painting. Again, Judas is isolated from the rest of the disciples by placing him on the other side of the table. There is also a very definite rhythmic composition. As in all of the Florentine renderings, Ghirlandaio uses perspective to emphasize Jesus's central figure in the painting.TITLE>Duccio

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/duccio.htm>

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About this capture

DUCCIO DI BUONINGHIGNA

The Last Supper, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena

Duccio di Buoninsegna (1255-1319), born in Siena, was an Italian painter. Founder of the Sienese school of painting, was a precursor to the Renaissance style. His work was entirely religious. He combined many elements into his paintings, in which he reflected the Byzantine style. His drawings were sensitive and he had a skillful composition. Though detail was not a major quality, his work had a definite decorative quality, almost like a mosaic. The tone of "The Last Supper" is more intense than the Byzantine qualities he modeled after, which included a heavy use of gold and more rigid figures. In his paintings, he added more humanity. Combining Gothic and Byzantine elements he creates a new kind of picture space. The lines of the room go back to create space. Though there is not an element of rhythm in the poses, as in Leonardo's "The Last Supper", he makes the drapery of the figures more soft and undulating. The disciples' faces are turned to Jesus, pointing the viewer's eye to the central figure, Jesus. Another important aspect of how Duccio moves from the Byzantine style of painting is by adding naturalness. He uses a minimum amount of gold coloring and his tones are more earthy. Painters of his time trained to have a framework within their paintings without a lack of three-dimensional space.

TITLE>Castagno

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/castagno.htm>

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About this capture

Andrea del Castagno

The Last Supper, Florence, Museo del Cenacolo di Sant'Apollonia
Andrea del Castagno,(1423-1457)working in Florence, Italy, painted mainly frescoes. Throughout the 14th century, the Last Supper scene was represented on frescoes that included the whole life of Jesus, but in the 15th century, they began to be painted on the entire wall. This painting was one of the first painted on an entire wall. One of the main things that can be noted about this painting, is the heavy use of perspective, with which the viewer can get a sense of the entire room and see that table goes back into the room. This is one of the first representations of the Last Supper in which there is a definite rhythm throughout the piece. With your eye you can trace the rhythmic lines throughout by the graceful poses of the figures' arms. It is also interesting to note how Castagno used color by blending the figures into the background by using the marble as a backdrop. This is also one of the first representations where individual characters can be recognized. It is clear that Judas is the disciple on the other side of the table so as to emphasize his isolation from the rest of the disciples. Each character is a sculpted volume with a unique expression and pose.

TITLE>Ghirlandaio

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/ghirlandaio.htm>

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About this capture

Domenico Ghirlandaio

The Last Supper, Cenacolo of Ognassanti, in the large refectory of the Ognissanti Convent, Florence

This representation is very much like Castagno's in its Florentine-like rendering. It carries a very heavy use of perspective by having the table go back into the room, but a major difference is in the use of light. In this painting, Ghirlandaio uses a lot of natural light that comes in through mainly through the side window and the back wall. This rendering is much more natural yet, is not like Flemish painting in that it doesn't have such an attention to detail, nor does it feel like an intimate setting, but rather carries more of an open atmosphere. The figures also, are not rigid, but rather flowing and rhymical and sculpted like a Roman statue, which was very characteristic of Florentine painters. Also, like Castagno, he makes each disciple unique with a unique pose and expression. As with most of the representations of the Last Supper during this time, Judas is isolated from the rest of the disciples, enabling the painter to express the story of his betrayal visually.

Close-up of Judas and Jesus in D. Ghirlandaio's Last Supper in the Cenacolo of the Badia at Passignano

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/signorelli.htm>

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About this capture

LUCA SIGNORELLI

Communion of the Apostles, Museo Diocesano Cortona

Luca Signorelli (1445-1523) was an Italian Renaissance painter who focused much of his painting around realistic anatomical detail. His inspiration for this was Michelangelo and Raphael. This rendering is the most different of the Renaissance paintings of the Last Supper. Perhaps this deviation from the typical rendering came because he was

from another area of Italy. Even so, Signorelli chose not to have the setting around a table or in a room, but rather in the open. Perspective is used through the going back of the Roman columns. Each figure is sculpted, individualized, and expressive, characteristic of Florentine art.TITLE>Tintoretto

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/tintoretto.htm>

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About this capture

JACOPO TINTORETTO

The Last Supper, S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

Jacopo Tintoretto (1518-1594), a Venetian Mannerist painter, was one of the most significant artists of the later 16th century. His paintings inspired many of the artists of the Baroque period. This painting shows an obvious deviation from Florentine art. He created spatial illusions and visual effects using lighting and other various forms of free, sketchy painting, in the way he applied paint. He also created an effect of spontaneous action.TITLE>Dali

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/allen/dali.htm>

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About this capture

SALVADOR DALI

The Sacrament of the Last Supper

Salvador Dali (1904-1989) shows an imaginative realism. He used visual effects and linear perspective, techniques developed in the 15th century, now apparent in this surrelistic rendering of the Last Supper. He incorporated aspects of 20th century painting, such as ideas of abstraction and subconscious thinking. Surealism tried to create such dream imagrey.

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/mKelley/SHEELER.htm>

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About this capture

Andrea del Verrocchio

Italian painter and sculptor

Andrea del Verrocchio (originally Andrea di Cione), Florentine sculptor and painter, who is ranked second only to Donatello among the Italian sculptors of the early Renaissance. He was born in Florence and, according to tradition, was trained in that city as a goldsmith, with Giuliano Verrocchio, whose name he supposedly adopted as his own; as a sculptor, with Donatello; and as a painter, with Alesso Baldovinetti. Later Verrocchio conducted a large academy in Florence that became the principal center of the arts. Among his pupils were Leonardo, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, and Perugino.

Verrocchio painted The Baptism of Christ, left, with pupil, Leonardo da Vinci.

The Florentine Renaissance
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About this capture
The Renaissance

The Florentine Renaissance

The Renaissance period in Florence was characterized by graceful lines, delicate color, linear perspective, and the use of gesture and movement. Verrocchio was raised in a time influenced by Early Renaissance artists such as Donatello. Verrocchio, Andrea del, real name Andrea di Michele di Francesco di Cioni (1435-1488), Florentine sculptor and painter, who is ranked second only to Donatello among the Italian sculptors of the early Renaissance. He was born in Florence and, according to tradition, was trained in that city as a goldsmith, with Giuliano Verrocchio, whose name he supposedly adopted as his own; as a sculptor, with Donatello; and as a painter, with Alesso Baldovinetti. Later Verrocchio conducted a large academy in Florence that became the principal center of the arts. Among his pupils were Leonardo, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, and Perugino.

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The Paintings of Andrea del Verrocchio

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The Baptism of Christ

(with Leonardo da Vinci)

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Head of a Girl

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Tobias and the Angel

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Christ with Thomas

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The Young David

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Pat Jacobs '99 on Hieronymous Bosch

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Liz Palmer '01 on Braque

Irene Barrett '02 on El Greco

Greg Waterman '00 on Mantegna

Dan Erstad '00 on Masaccio

Rebecca Allen '00 on "The Last Supper"

Martha Kelley '03 on "Sheeler"
Sean Kennedy '02 on Andrea del Verrocchio "
Allison Hathway '01 on "Leonardo da Vinci"
Brett Carty '00 on Domenico Ghirlandaio
Taryn Streich '00 on Stonehenge
Doug Hitchner '00 and Ian Wallace '01 on Sumeria
Alicia Wetmore '03 on The Pyramids of Egypt
Lydia Haas '00 on Ancient Egyptian Jewelry
Casey Degen '01 on King Tut
Meredith Jacobs '00 on the Palace of Minos
"Lichtenstein" by Vanessa Sordoni, '03

Flash Projects:

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"Bounce" by Avery Morse, '03
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"In House Flight School" by Andrew Heier
"Gambling Fish" by Brian O'Neill, '04
"Dance Lesson" by Ashley Johnson, '03
"Baseball Movie" by Eric Minnick, '05

Chris Pope's Videos - Bryce 3D, Poser, Flash:
(Download may be slow, but worth the wait)

"Skateboarder"
"Soar"
"Soar2"
"Circle"
"Fight"
"N Club"
"Talking man"
"Through the hoops"

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Leonardo da Vinci

By Allison Hathaway

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Self Portrait

Madonna Litta, 1490-1491

Leonardo's importance

Leonardo had one of the greatest scientific minds of the Italian Renaissance. He wanted to know the workings of what he saw in nature. Many of his inventions and scientific ideas were centuries ahead of his time. For example, he was the first person to study the flight of birds scientifically. Leonardo's importance to art was even greater than his importance to science. He had a strong influence on many leading artists, including Raphael and Michelangelo. Leonardo's balanced compositions and idealized figures became standard features of later Renaissance art. Painters also tried to imitate Leonardo's knowledge of perspective and anatomy, and his accurate observations of nature.

Paintings

For much of his life, Leonardo was interested in optics, which is concerned with the properties of light. Leonardo carefully analyzed such things as the pattern of light and shadow on a sphere before a window. The understanding he gained from such study is evident in the rich effects of light, dark, and color in such paintings as the Mona Lisa and The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne (early 1500's). Leonardo also explored the techniques of perspective, which painters use to create an illusion of depth on a flat surface. Florentine artists began to use these techniques in the early 1400's. Linear perspective is based on the optical illusion that parallel lines seem to converge as they recede toward one point, called a vanishing point. Aerial perspective is based on the fact that light, shade, and color change with an object's distance from the viewer.

~Summers

Portrait

Madonna and Child with a Pomegranate, 1470-1475

The Last Supper, 1495-1497

Timeline

April 15, 1452 Leonardo da Vinci born on a small farm in Vinci
December 1452 Father took Leonardo to Florence
1466 Became apprentice at best studio in Italy
1481 Leonardo went to Milan to paint for the Duke of Milan, Ludovico Sforza.
1495-1497 Worked on "Last Supper" and made many inventions for the army
1502 Leonardo came back to Florence to enter the service of Cesare Borgia
1503 Started "Mona Lisa"
1506 Went back to Milan at the summons of its French governor, Charles d'Amboise
1507 Named court painter to King XII of France
1516 Went to France to enter service for King Francis I and lived in Amboise Castle
May 2, 1519 Died at 67 years old

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/carty/1STPAGE.htm>

12 captures

18 Dec 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

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26

2003 2004 2005

[About this capture](#)

The painting above is one that he and his fellow partners, painted in the Sistine chapel. Domenico Ghirlandaio, also known as Domenico Di Tamso Bigordi, was born in 1449 in the city of Florence. He led a successful life until the age of 44 when he was struck with fever and he died five days later. Ghirlandaio was known for his old, but somewhat new, techniques. His style was very similar to the old school of Florentine painting. He owned a workshop in Florence, and he worked along side his brothers Benedetto and Davide. He also undertook an apprentice that would be one of the most famous painters ever, Michelangelo. Originally he was classically trained as a goldsmith. This is what his father had wished for him to be because painting is not considered a beneficial trade by many. This would have been a great loss to the world. If he had not become a painter we would have lost some of the excellent works that he produced, and just as importantly Michaelangelo wouldn't have been the famous painter that we all know.

THE ARTWORK OF DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO

MAP OF FLORENCE

DISCUSSION OF ARTWORK

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12 captures

22 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

Aug SEP Oct

26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/html/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Sumer/PAGE1.HTM>

38 captures

7 Mar 2002 - 28 Aug 2007

Dec AUG Sep

21

2006 2007 2008

About this capture

Nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers the ancient area of Mesopotamia housed the first known civilization to read and write, the Sumerians. Although this may be their greatest accomplishment, architecture was also prominent. This figure is a ziggurat, perhaps the best known type of Sumerian Architecture. In Sumer the ziggurat was considered the center of town because it held the temple. Ziggurats are comparable to the Pyramids of Egypt in size and shape. This is the site of King Untash Napirisha's Ziggurat, Chogha Zanbil, 25 miles south-east of Susa, c 1250 BC

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ZIGGURATS.

CLICK HERE IF YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT SUMERIAN SCULPTURE.

CLICK ON MAP TO SEE THE AREA THAT THE SUMERIANS LIVED.

CLICK ON BIBLIOGRAPHY TO SEE A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY.

CLICK HERE TO RETURN TO THE STUDENT DIGITAL ART PAGE TO SELECT OTHER PROJECTS.

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/html/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Wetmore/PTITLE.htm>

11 captures

28 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

Aug SEP Oct

26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Return to Student Digital Art Homepage

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Wetmore/PPYRAMIDBUILD1.htm>

3 captures

24 Jan 2003 - 31 Jan 2004

Jul JAN Feb

31

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Pyramid Building

First, the pharaoh would give orders to his architect to build a pyramid. Before the plans for the pyramid were finished, a site for the pyramid would be chosen. When the plans were completed, the architect would bring them to the pharaoh. While the pharaoh was reviewing the plans, thousands of men including stone cutters, surveyors, masons, foremen, mortar makers, carpenters, and general laborers came to the area. These men would either be working at the pyramid or in quarries cutting the millions of stones needed to make a pyramid. Barracks and work-shops were built at both sites.

Farmers worked on the pyramid during July through November, this was because they couldn't farm due to floods from the Nile. They were put into groups to transport stone from the quarries to the site. The men were paid in food, clothing, and beer.

The workmen used many tools such as chisels, dolerite balls, mallets, hammers, polishing stones, trowels, squares, levels, adzes, boning rods, plumb rules, drills, plumblines, saws, and carpenter's chisels. The tools were made of copper or a very hard stone called dolerite. The handles for the tools were made from wood. Metal workers were hired at both sites to sharpen tools and make new ones.

Once the plans were approved, the architect would order the site to be cleared of sand and rubble to show the rock that the pyramid would be built upon. At the same time, scribes made lists of how much stone would be needed for each block. The lists were sent to the quarries, and the men started to cut stone.

To get the best stone, workers dug into the face of the cliffs and cut the stone block by

block. When each block had been cut, it was assigned to a work group who had to bring the block to the site. The men would use rope and heavy timber to roll the heavy block onto a wood sled and tie it down. There would be a big boat waiting that could hold several blocks. The men dragged the block along parallel logs embedded in the sand so the runners on the sled wouldn't sink from weight. Every stone was marked with a group name that hauled the block and when the group reached the site, their name would be checked off a list by a scribe.

Before the workers actually started to build, true north had to be found so the pyramid could be correctly built. A circular wall was built in the middle of the site to help figure out north and south through the horizon line. Next, the boundaries of the pyramid were marked by the surveyors and the architect. Four metal stakes were put in the ground at each of the four corners. To bless the site, several animals were sacrificed to the gods.

Before construction began, the site had to be completely leveled by digging trenches into the ground and then filling each one with the same amount of water and marking where the water came up to on the trenches. The trenches were drained and then the rock was cut along the markings. Next, they filled the trenches with rock cut down to the exact height. The site of the mortuary temple was leveled and became a work area for stone cutters. After that, the foundation of the valley temple and causeway were built.

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2 captures

24 Jan 2003 - 31 Jan 2004

Jan JAN Feb

31

2003 2004 2005

[About this capture](#)

[Egyptian Art](#)

Egyptian art in general can be described as very rigid. The art was highly based off of geometric shapes and did not differ from these structures. Egyptian art is extremely straightforward. The pyramid is a classic example of Egyptian art. They are geometric in shape, rigid, and straightforward. Internally, pyramids are also geometric wonders with well-designed rooms that can hold the weight of the thousands of stone blocks above the room.

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3 captures

24 Jan 2003 - 31 Jan 2004

Jul JAN Feb

31

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Ziggurat VS. Pyramid

Ziggurat

Pyramid

A Ziggurat is basically a step-pyramid, similar to the one of Dozer. However, unlike the pyramids at Giza, ziggurats do not have smooth sides. Also, they are much smaller than those found at Giza and are made of brick, not limestone.

Another difference between the two is in usage. The Pyramid, as you have read under the purpose of pyramids, served as a burial site for the pharaoh. However, the ziggurat serves as a platform for temples and no one is buried there.

Yet another difference is the fact that the Egyptians traveled inside of the pyramid and did not travel on the outside of the pyramid, probably because the pyramids are flat sided. However, the ziggurats were meant to be traveled on the outside and there are no internal passages within them.

The main difference between the ziggurat and the pyramid was that the ziggurat came from an Asian culture while the pyramid, of course, came from Egypt. While these two cultures had contact with each other, the development of the ziggurat and the pyramid were independent of each other. Even still, the step pyramids of Egypt and ziggurats look fairly alike. Also, both the pyramid and the ziggurat do not stand alone and are part of complexes that include shrines and public buildings.

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14 captures

22 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

Aug SEP Oct

26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Ancient Egyptian Jewelry

Ancient Egyptian Jewelry reflects the culture through the designs and symbols. Egypt was a hierarchical society. The gods dominated and the pharaohs followed. The pharaohs were considered gods incarnate. Some of the jewelry contains symbolic images for the gods or pharaohs.

Click here to see a timeline

Retrun to Student Digital Art page

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/kingtut/tut.htm>

15 captures

28 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

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26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

King Tutankhamun's original name was Tutankhaten. He reigned as king of Egypt from 1333-1323 B.C. Through medical analysis, it has been determined that King Tut was the son-in-law of the former King Akhenaton. King Tut married Akhenaton's third daughter, Ankhesenamun. Because he was only nine when he came to reign, he was placed under the counsel of Ay, a friend of the royal family. During his reign, he moved his residence to Memphis, the administrative capital. Sometime before 1329 B.C., he changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun. King Tut died unexpectedly at the age of 18 and because none of his children survived, Ay succeeded him and may have married his widow.

King Tutankhamun's tomb is a magnificent example of typical Egyptian art style. Throughout time, Egyptian art has always had a sense of rigidness and non-movement. They believed that any movement or showing of emotion would be a sign of weakness. Movement and facial expression were reserved for pieces of art depicting slaves or the common people. The Egyptians believed the Pharaoh to be a living god and therefore he was never shown in action. As seen in this shabti, which was supposed to represent the deceased in the afterlife, very little emotion and movement were shown.

To map of King Tut's Tomb

To map of Egypt

To bibliography

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/minosite.htm>

13 captures

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26
2003 2004 2005

About this capture
animation by Meredith Jacobs

THE PALACE OF MINOS

-To Eastern Wing- -To Courtyard- -To Room In The West Wing- -To Queen's
Apartment- -To Snake Goddess- -To Storage Jars-

Click to see sources
Click here to return to the Student Digital Art Page to select other projects
<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/LINK-1.HTM>
4 captures
28 Mar 2002 - 16 Jul 2004
Jan JUL Aug
16
2002 2004 2005

About this capture

THE EASTERN WING

The Eastern Wing of The Palace of Minos holds the royal apartments and is also the first section built. The stones in this section are rougher than those of the other sections of the palace, and the higher levels which were built later. During the time it took to build the palace, technology to better smooth the large stones advanced, therefore making the older sections of the palace rougher.

CLICK TO RETURN

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/LINK-2.HTM>
5 captures
10 Jan 2003 - 16 Jul 2004
Jan JUL Aug
16

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

THE COURTYARD

The Courtyard was created so that air could pass through the royal apartments and other rooms in the palace. When planning the palace, the courtyard was not included. In place of it were shrines to honor royal guests. There is evidence of this through the materials used on the courtyard pillars. If this had been the original structure, the pillars would have been put in place first to structure the palace, but instead, the pillars are shown to be newer than the stones which they support. The open area was most likely covered with pillars extending to the ground, but in when they opened it up, smaller and newer pillars were added along the edges of the courtyard.

CLICK HERE TO RETURN

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/LINK-3.HTM>

7 captures

28 Mar 2002 - 16 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

16

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

ROOM IN THE WEST WING

This room in the west wing shows one of the few remaining fully structured sections left in the palace. It's wooden supports show an advanced method of structure. Mixing wood and stone, creates a longer lasting foundation for the palace. Smaller stones were used higher up in the building for two reasons: 1)Smaller rocks helped to balance the larger rocks underneath. 2)Larger stones were scarce since many of the nearby ones had been taken for the lower structure and rocks farther away were impossible to transport.

CLICK TO RETURN

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/LINK-4.HTM>

7 captures

28 Mar 2002 - 16 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

16

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

QUEEN'S APARTMENT

The queen's apartment shows the artistic and flowing nature of the Minoan society. Crete, being surrounded by water and bright colors creates fluidity throughout their art and palace structure in general. These dolphins are light and free, as was the Minoan culture. Although very secluded some Egyptian characteristics were carried over such as strong outlines and profiles.

CLICK TO RETURN

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/LINK-5.HTM>

5 captures

28 Mar 2002 - 16 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

16

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

SNAKE GODDESS

This example of Minoan culture shows some mystical and rhythmic aspects of Minoan art. The snake pattern is repeated throughout other artwork such as the storage jars. Minoan culture valued women and the virtue they brought upon the children. This Snake Goddess represents women as champions and overseers of the community. Her shape is very cone-like (like Mesopotamian sculpture), yet at the same time very voluptuous for child bearing. Strong curves flow throughout Minoan artwork reflecting the wavy ocean surrounding their peaceful island.

CLICK TO RETURN

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/minoan/LINK-6.HTM>

6 captures

28 Mar 2002 - 16 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

16

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

STORAGE JARS

These jars were most likely used for storage of water inside the royal apartments. More decorative pots were used for display when guests visited, and were commonly given as gifts. Fine, detailed artwork was cherished because of its workmanship and its strong significance to culture. These jars, not as detailed

as those of Roman times, show fluidity with rounded lines, and the curves resemble the waves of the ocean. These pots are very spherical as those of the Egyptian times. The sphere is considered the most perfect shape and is the never-ending boundaries of life. The waves endlessly travel around the jars symbolizing the never-ending ocean on which they live.

CLICK TO RETURN

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page1.htm>

12 captures

22 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

Aug SEP Oct

26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Enter

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7 captures

24 Feb 2002 - 16 Jul 2004

Jun JUL Aug

16

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Roy Lichtenstein

1923 -1997

CLICK TO GO!

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page1.htm>

12 captures

22 Feb 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

May JUL Aug

04

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page3.htm>

2 captures

31 Jan 2004 - 21 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

21

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

From the Begining

Rob Lichtenstein was born in New York City in 1923.

He first became intreseted in art when a junior in high school.

His earliest major influence was Picasso and in particular, Picasso's blue period.

Picasso 1900's

Marsh 1936

Back

In 1939, Lichtenstein took a summer art course under the teachings of Reginald Marsh.

The influences of Marsh's work can be seen in Litchensteins work in the similar elements of cartoonism.

Foward

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page4.htm>

4 captures

13 Jan 2003 - 21 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

21

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

After receiving his masters in Fine Arts from Ohio University, he first publicly showed his work.

In the begining he was catagorized as an abstract expressionist with heavy influences of cubism.

Back

Lichtenstein was later drawn towards Pop Art, when his son, pointing towards a Mickey Mouse comic book bet him he "couldn't paint as good as that".

This bet led him to paint a series of 6 paintings resembling characters from comic strips.

In these piece, he first used styles of Ben-Day dots, lettering and speech balloons that would later be a sign of his work.

Foward

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page4.htm>

4 captures
13 Jan 2003 - 21 Jul 2004
Jan JUL Aug
21
2003 2004 2005

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Foward
<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page6.htm>
4 captures
14 Jan 2003 - 21 Jul 2004
Jan JUL Aug
21
2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Cliff Dwellers

George Bellows 1913

Cottonwood III

Georgia O'Keefe 1944

Marilyn

Andy Warhol 1962

Anna Christina

Andrew Wyeth 1964

Chair Car

Edward Hopper 1965

Still Life With Glass And Peeled Lemon

Roy Lichtenstein 1972

Although Lichtenstein had a very original style, it is easy to see influences of other artists

of his time in his work.

Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Pilsbury

Philip Pearlstein 1973

Last Curtain Call of The Paletts

Mordecai Ardon 1979

Ocean Park No.15

Richard Diebenkorn 1979

Back

Can You Hear Me

Elizabeth Murray 1984

Blood on The Floor

Francis Bacon 1986

The Golden Days

Balthus 1990

Forward

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchtenstein/page7.htm>

4 captures

13 Jan 2003 - 21 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

21

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Sea Scape

Litchenstein 1996

Litchenstein "applied his trademark style to the tradition of ancient Chinese landscape painting, subtly manipulating the size and density of the dots to capture the atmospheric quality of these expansive views of water and sky."

from: <http://www.mfa.org/handbook/portrait.asp?id=391&s;=9>

Sea Scape, being one of his later works, is a prime example of Litchenstein's progression towards the end of his life to work more from his own visions rather than by producing replications as seen in his earlier "comic book" work.

Back

Foward

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/Litchenstein/page8.htm>

3 captures

14 Jan 2003 - 21 Jul 2004

Jan JUL Aug

21

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/tl/20th/pop-art.html>

http://www.artchive.com/ftp_site.htm

- From "Lives of the Great 20th-Century Artists", by Edward Lucie-Smith

<http://encarta.msn.com/find/Concise.asp?z=1&pg;=2&ti;=761561190>

http://204.168.68.231/site/artist_bio_88.html

http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/lichtenstein_roy.html

http://www.time.com/time/magazine/1997/dom/971013/aappr.pops_most_pop.html

<http://www.fi.muni.cz/~toms/PopArt/Biographies/lichtenstein.html>

<http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/1997/10/03/feat/arts.2.html>

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<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/partridge/turntable.htm>

12 captures

27 Aug 2002 - 26 Sep 2004

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26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

This is my second major project with Adobe 5.5. I had finished my primary project, and I wanted to start something brighter and more... um... optimistic. It is called "Turntable Madness".

This picture is also inspired. This time by the wonderful musical stylings and manipulations of DJ Shadow. I suggest you check his CDs out ("Endtroducing...." and "U.N.K.L.E.: Psyence Fiction" and some of his other EPs), they are outstanding, and a change of pace from what you might regularly hear on the radio or in your CD changer.

"Turntable Madness" is not inspired by DJ Shadow himself or his music directly, but how he does it and what he does it with, a turntable... Enjoy!

Graham M. Partridge

<http://www.ea.pvt.k12.pa.us/htm/units/upper/arts/a/kids/digital/partridge/theday.htm>

11 captures

31 Jan 2003 - 26 Sep 2004

Aug SEP Oct

26

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

This is my first major project with Adobe 5.5. I first drew it by hand, then made it look real pretty like with Adobe.

It is called "The Day The World Went Away". The title, and some elements of the picture were inspired by a Nine Inch Nails song of the same name.

I wanted the picture to be very surreal, horrifying and chaotic, symbolizing the end of the world.

Graham M. Partridge

http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/ziggurats/home_set.html

306 captures

16 Oct 2001 - 13 Oct 2025

May JUN Jul

03

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IS/SANDERS/PHOTOS/MESO/BORSIPPA/borsippa06.html>

7 captures

25 Jan 2003 - 20 Sep 2008

Nov MAY Sep

04

2004 2006 2008

About this capture

Borsippa

Ziggurat

[RETURN TO BORSIPPA THUMBNAIL PAGE 1](#)

[RETURN TO MESOPOTAMIA MAP](#)

[RETURN TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PHOTOGRAPHY](#)

Revised: January 18, 2002

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<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IS/SANDERS/PHOTOS/MESO/BORSIPPA/borsippa06.html>

<http://www.mazzaroth.com/ChapterThree/TowerOfBabel.htm>

193 captures

2 Dec 1998 - 14 Sep 2025

Jan APR Jun

21

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

From The Alpha and the Omega - Chapter Three

by Jim A. Cornwell, Copyright © 1995, all rights reserved

" The Tower of Babel and Babylon, Gilgamesh, Ningizzida, Gudea "

Ancient Tower

The Tower of Babel

In the Babylonian flood account (the Gilgamesh Epic), Noah's counterpart is Utnapishtim. He likewise received divine warnings of the Flood, built a huge ark, preserved human and animal life, sent out birds, and offered sacrifices. However the gross polytheism and absurdities of the Babylonian account demonstrated that it

suffered from a long oral transmission and that it did not influence Genesis in any way.

Genesis 10:8-10 "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one (first king) in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." Nimrod (Heb. nimrodh), a descendent of Ham, was responsible for building the city of Babel (Babylon). This individual was the beginning of the kingdom in Babylonia, and he became the founder of Nineveh and other cities in Assyria. He became distinguished as a hunter, ruler, and builder. He lived for an undetermined amount of centuries after the Flood, and was the grandson of Ham. He was a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded men not to ascribe to God, in order to bring them into a constant dependence upon his own power. He swore to build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! Thus avenging himself on God for destroying their forefathers!

Many legends have grown up around the name of Nimrod, some claiming that he was identical with "Ninus," an early Babylonian king or god. Again, some have associated Nimrod with the building of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Others have identified him with the ancient king of Babylonia, Gilgamesh, but there is no proof that the two were identical.

Also attributed to him and his people were the building of Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Asshur, son of Nimrod, built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah and Resen.

This group of cities formed the center of what there was of civilization at that time on this planet. This civilization is not to be despised or looked upon as being primitive in the sense of its lacking culture and technology. Archaeologists find that the further back in time the digs in this area go, the more advanced the earlier cultures is found to have been. The founding culture came from Noah who had sufficient technology.

Erech (Heb. 'erekh), a city of ancient Babylonia founded by Nimrod, the Babylonian form of the name is Uruk. The modern site is called Warka and is located near the Euphrates River, forty miles NW of Ur. Erech was the home of Gilgamesh, the hero of the great Akkadian epic. Archaeologists have found that this city was one of the oldest of Babylonia, founded before 4000 B.C. One of the earliest dynasties of the Sumerians ruled from Erech, it boasted the first ziggurat, or temple tower, and began the use of clay cylinder seals.

Nineveh (Heb. nineweh) is one of the most ancient cities of the world, founded by Nimrod. It is on the banks of the Tigris opposite the site of the modern Mosul in Iraq.

Nimrud (Gen. 10:6-12) is ancient Calah (Heb. Calneh) in Assyria, founded by Nimrod but possibly built by Asshur and is famous for its immense statuary in the form of winged lions and winged bulls.

Akkad (Heb. 'akkadh), whose location is unknown, but thought to be identified with Agade, which Sargon I, the Semitic conqueror of the Sumerian Akkadians, made his capital in c.2350 B.C.

Shinar (Heb. shin'ar) or the region that contained the cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Caleh. Genesis 11:1-9 on the plain of Shinar, they started to build a tower. Amraphel, king of Shinar, invaded Canaan in the days of Abram (Gen. 14:1). Nebuchadnezzar was ruler of the land of Shinar (Dan. 1:20).

Resen (Heb. resen, fortified place), as Xenophon reports that Larissa was a strongly fortified city in this section between Nineveh and Calah.

Rehoboth (Heb. rehovoth, broad places).

Babylon means "gate of the god," and was the center of civilization for nearly two thousand years.

Babel, Tower of (babel, gate of God), Babylon, the Greek form of the Hebrew word bavel, which is closely allied and probably derived from the Akkadian babilu or "gate of God." The date of its foundation is still disputed. The connection between Akkad, Calneh, Erech, and Babylon (Gen. 10:10) indicates a period at least as early as 3000 B.C. Babylon may have been founded originally by the Sumerians, and an early tablet recorded that Sargon of Akkad (c. 2400) destroyed Babylon.

The Ishtar gate was decorated with figures of lions (passant) in enameled brick, it also had relief figures of bulls and dragons. The temple of Ninmah, goddess of the underworld, was built by Ashurbanipal near the Ishtar gate.

Sumer's principal cities were Nippur, Adab, Lagash, Umma, Larsa, Erech, Ur, and Eridu.

"It was an important trading center and capital of the ancient kingdom of Babylonia. Babylon stood about 60 miles south of Baghdad on the banks of the Euphrates River where the present city Al Hillah, Iraq, now stands. Babylon means gate of God. The Biblical or Hebrew word for Babylon was Babel. The ziggurat, great Tower of Babel, was a terraced pyramid that stood in the temple area. It first became an important city about 2,000 B.C. until its fall in 539 B.C. prophesied by the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament." -- The World Book Encyclopedia "BABYLON."

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relief "Goddess of the Tree of Life" ca. 2500 B.C. Dumuzi's mother was Ningizzida, an ancestor of Gilgamesh, consort of Ianna (Ishtar). The Great Goddess (symbolized by Demeter) also correlates to Dionysus-Bacchus-Zagreus (or in the older, Sumerian-Babylonian myths, Dumuzi-absu, Tammuz, the "child of the abyss," who was originally a tree god and son of Ningishzida, he died because of Ishtar's love. Tammuz also Thammuz is the tenth month of the year in the Jewish calendar [Hebrew Tammuz, from Babylonian Du'uzu, the name of a god]. In Egypt, Tammuz was a god of harvest (late summer month) of Mesopotamia, Akkad and Sumer. Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14) is equivalent to Osiris (Hay-Tau) in Egypt and Adonis [Greek Adonis, from Phoenician adon, lord]. Osiris is Dionysus in the Greek tongue, and the Roman Bacchus. A cylinder seal from Erech, end of the fourth century B.C., depicts the god Tammuz (a fertility god widely worshipped in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine) feeding the cattle of the temple. Tammuz was killed by a wild boar while shepherding his flocks. His wife rescued him from the underworld. His death was taken to represent the onset of winter. The Adonis Cult (in Nega, Byblus -Syrian coast) parallels Dumuzi, Tammuz, and Attis.

(Gilgamesh's ancestor Ningizzida or Ningishzida, was mother and wife of Dumuzi).

Seen below is the Libation Cup of King Gudea of Lagash (an ornamental Sumerian ritual cup) ca. 2000 B.C. Sumer, one can view two composite beasts of a type called "lion-birds" who are drawing back the portals of a shrine (sanctuary) to reveal the great Mesopotamian serpent-god Ningishzida in his dual aspect, entwined about an axial rod as a pair of copulating vipers. If this is the serpent-god then this explains why Dumuzi-absu, Tammuz was called the "child of the abyss."

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Gula as Ninmah (See Ninkhursag) alias Nintu, Ki, Ninki, Ninmah, Ninlil, Innini, Bau, Gula, Ninkarrak, Gam-Tum-Dug, Belit-Illu, Belitis, was one of four main Sumerian gods (See Damkina). Damkina or Damgalnunna; alias Ninka, goddess wife of Ea -- Sumerian god of sweet waters. As Ninlil wife of Enlil; as Ninki wife of Enki (Ea).

In the twentieth century Sir Leonard Wooley discovered at the mound of al'Ubaid near Ur and ancient temple dedicated by A-anni-pad-da, (king of Ur, son of Mes-anni-pad-da, who was the founder of the third dynasty after the Flood in the Sumerian lists of sovereigns) to the goddess Nin-Kharsag. The first of the divine kings was Dungi, the son of the goddess Ninsun.

Here there is much similarity between the male:

Dungi-Dumuzi-Ninurta-Aannipadda

and the female:

Ninsum-Ningizzida-Gula-Ninmah-Ninkursag-Damkina-Ninka-Mesannipadda.

Photo of Libation Cup taken at the Louvre

in 1999 by Chris Tolley

Again from The Mythic Image, page 282-283 the figures below show "an ornamental Sumerian ritual cup of the same period as the Indus Valley seal regarding a deity with worshipers and serpents. Two composite beasts of a type called "lion-birds" draw back the portals of a sanctuary, where an apparition appears of the great Mesopotamian serpent-god Ningishzida, under the aspect of a pair of copulating vipers. The two are entwined about an axial rod in such a way as to suggest both the caduceus of classical Hermes, guide of souls to rebirth in eternal life, and the Indian diagram of seven spinal centers touched and wakened to consciousness in Kundalini yoga by the rising Serpent Power."

King Gudea's Libation Cup

Gula Bau and Dumuzi

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From The Alpha and the Omega - Chapter Three

by Jim A. Cornwell, Copyright © 1995, all rights reserved

" The Tower of Babel and Babylon, Gilgamesh, Ningizzida, Gudea "

Ancient Tower

The Tower of Babel

In the Babylonian flood account (the Gilgamesh Epic), Noah's counterpart is Utnapishtim. He likewise received divine warnings of the Flood, built a huge ark, preserved human and animal life, sent out birds, and offered sacrifices. However the gross polytheism and absurdities of the Babylonian account demonstrated that it suffered from a long oral transmission and that it did not influence Genesis in any way.

Genesis 10:8-10 "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one (first king) in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." Nimrod (Heb. nimrodh), a descendent of Ham, was responsible for building the city of Babel (Babylon). This individual was the beginning of the kingdom in Babylonia, and he became the founder of Nineveh and other cities in Assyria. He became distinguished as a hunter, ruler, and builder. He lived for an undetermined amount of centuries after the Flood, and was the grandson of Ham. He was a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded men not to ascribe to God, in order to bring them into a constant dependence upon his own power. He swore to build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! Thus avenging himself on God for destroying their forefathers!

Many legends have grown up around the name of Nimrod, some claiming that he was identical with "Ninus," an early Babylonian king or god. Again, some have associated Nimrod with the building of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Others have identified him with the ancient king of Babylonia, Gilgamesh, but there is no proof that the two were identical.

Also attributed to him and his people were the building of Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Asshur, son of Nimrod, built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah and Resen.

This group of cities formed the center of what there was of civilization at that time on this planet. This civilization is not to be despised or looked upon as being primitive in the sense of its lacking culture and technology. Archaeologists find that the further back in time the digs in this area go, the more advanced the earlier cultures is found to have been. The founding culture came from Noah who had sufficient technology.

Erech (Heb. 'erekh), a city of ancient Babylonia founded by Nimrod, the Babylonian form of the name is Uruk. The modern site is called Warka and is located near the Euphrates River, forty miles NW of Ur. Erech was the home of Gilgamesh, the hero of the great Akkadian epic. Archaeologists have found that this city was one of the oldest of Babylonia, founded before 4000 B.C. One of the earliest dynasties of the Sumerians ruled from Erech, it boasted the first ziggurat, or temple tower, and began the use of clay cylinder seals.

Nineveh (Heb. nineweh) is one of the most ancient cities of the world, founded by Nimrod. It is on the banks of the Tigris opposite the site of the modern Mosul in Iraq.

Nimrud (Gen. 10:6-12) is ancient Calah (Heb. Calneh) in Assyria, founded by Nimrod but possibly built by Asshur and is famous for its immense statuary in the form of winged lions and winged bulls.

Akkad (Heb. 'akkadh), whose location is unknown, but thought to be identified with

Agade, which Sargon I, the Semitic conqueror of the Sumerian Akkadians, made his capital in c.2350 B.C.

Shinar (Heb. shin'ar) or the region that contained the cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Caleh. Genesis 11:1-9 on the plain of Shinar, they started to build a tower. Amraphel, king of Shinar, invaded Canaan in the days of Abram (Gen. 14:1). Nebuchadnezzar was ruler of the land of Shinar (Dan. 1:20).

Resen (Heb. resen, fortified place), as Xenophon reports that Larissa was a strongly fortified city in this section between Nineveh and Calah.

Rehoboth (Heb. rehovoth, broad places).

Babylon means "gate of the god," and was the center of civilization for nearly two thousand years.

Babel, Tower of (babel, gate of God), Babylon, the Greek form of the Hebrew word bavel, which is closely allied and probably derived from the Akkadian babilu or "gate of God." The date of its foundation is still disputed. The connection between Akkad, Calneh, Erech, and Babylon (Gen. 10:10) indicates a period at least as early as 3000 B.C. Babylon may have been founded originally by the Sumerians, and an early tablet recorded that Sargon of Akkad (c. 2400) destroyed Babylon.

The Ishtar gate was decorated with figures of lions (passant) in enameled brick, it also had relief figures of bulls and dragons. The temple of Ninmah, goddess of the underworld, was built by Ashurbanipal near the Ishtar gate.

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Gula Bau and Dumuzi

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<http://www.mazzaroth.com/ChapterThree/AsshurCorrection.htm>

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About this capture

From The Alpha and the Omega - Volume III

by Jim A. Cornwell, Copyright © July 20, 2003, all rights reserved

"Correction for Asshur's Descendants"

On January 13, 2003, I received the following email comment:

"Jim,

I notice you have stated that Asshur was the son of Nimrod, but nowhere in the Bible does it say he was the son of Nimrod. I would think if in fact he was the son of Nimrod, Moses would have said so in light of the fact he made that distinction with so many others.

I like you, always assumed that was the case until I saw Asshur's name listed as a son of SHEM NOT CUSH.

This brings great new meaning when you trace the births and spread of families to the fact God moved on Terah to get up and leave UR for they lived at the time of the confusion of languages and the conduct and influence of a guy like Nimrod began to pollute the children of Shem so that explains very clearly why Terah and his sons were told to go to Haran. Sheds an entirely NEW light on this matter. Sometimes the Bible is clearer by what it doesn't say than what it does say. In this case we cannot assume the Asshur who built those cities was a son of Nimrod.

I would think if Nimrod had other sons such an important person as Nimrod would have his offspring listed by Moses.

Chew on it...

G Hiles"

Response to Gary Hiles' email:

Yes you are perfectly correct in your statement about the descendant, as to the phrase on the website at www.mazzaroth.com/ChapterThree/BiblicalInfoOfGiants.htm. "Also attributed to him and his people were the building of Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Asshur, son of Nimrod, built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah and Resen."

Thank you for making me aware of it, and as you stated it is an easy one to make "Asshur son of Shem" verses "Asshur (Assyria) god of Assyrians.

Asshur is the builder of Nineveh, and nearby cities (Gen 10:11 JB, KJV). He comes from the kingdom of Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, but may not be of his race, for in Genesis 10:22 and 1 Chronicles 1:17 Asshur is a descendant of Shem as you claim.

In Balaam's prophecy (Num 24:22, 24) Asshur appears to be Assyria.

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<http://www.mazzaroth.com/ChapterThree/BiblicalInfoOfGiants.htm>

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From The Alpha and the Omega - Chapter Three

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" Biblical Information of Giants (8,850 B.C. to 1,300 B.C.) "

Annunaki (Anak, Anakim, Anakites, Nephilim, Arba, Rephaites). Anu, Pleiades, An, Anshar, Kishar, Antu, Ki, Gibil, Nusku, Gulu, Ninmah, Nergal, Cuthah, Kuta, Gudua, Gudea, Imdugud, Ningursu, Danu.

Giants before the Flood

Then the Elohim (Hebrew idiom of a plural of magnitude or majesty (Gen. 1:1), used of heathen gods, or of angels or judges as representatives of God, Elohim is plural in sense as well as form. It's etymology, the most likely roots mean either "be strong," or "be in front," the power and preeminence of God; as to EL (Heb. 'el, God) it is a generic word for God in the Semitic languages: Aramaic elah, Arabic ilah, Akkadian ilu. In the OT, el is used over two hundred times for God. El has a plural, elim, occasionally elhm in Ugaritic; but the Hebrews needed no plural, though a plural term, 'elohim, was their regular name for God. The root from which 'el was derived may have come from 'wl, "to be strong"; from an Arabic root 'ul, "to be in front of" as a leader from a Hebrew root 'lh to which both 'el and 'elohim belonged, with the meaning "strong"; from the preposition el, "to be in front of"; and using the same prepositions, as putting forth the idea of God as the goal for which all men seek. A truly satisfactory theory is impossible, because 'el and the other terms for God, 'elohim and 'eloha, are all prehistoric in origin.) make their return in Genesis 6:2, when the "sons of God" have intercourse with the "daughters of men," ..."and they took them wives of all which they chose." The results of this event beget Lamech (Heb. lemekh, meaning undetermined), father of Noah, based his faith on the promised deliverance from the Adamic curse of Gen. 3:14-19, he foresees, even if faintly, the coming of One of his seed (cf. 1 Chron. 1:3; Luke 3:36) who will remove that curse (cf. Rom. 8:18-25). Jared was Enoch's father, who through tradition dictated to his son about 5800 B.C. "The Lamentations of Jared" how Gods came to the earth and led astray his own tribe of Adam and those tribes of Cain also.

From Adam to Noah there were seven major Patriarchs born, Noah being the eighth person as shown in 2 Peter 2:5. Note that Cain and Abel are not counted for a total of ten, but Seth was the first.

Uta-Napishtim (Babylonian Noah) was the tenth King of Babylon before the Flood. The Sumerian King List mentions five cities existing before the Flood; Eridu, Bad-tinia, Larak, Sippar, and Shuruppak.

The first king was Alorus, who ruled for 120 sari, or 432,000 years before the Flood (note 162,000 years).

Abulim reigned for 28,800 years.

Abolga reigned 36,000 years.

Two more kings reigned for 64,800 years.

These represented the five cities. While in Eridu Kings from Heaven reigned for 64,800 years before the Flood.

If eight kings ruled for 241,200 years then the last five kings totaled 140,400 years.

Moreover, a Chaldean priest, Berossos, writing in Greek ca. 289 B.C., reported that according to Mesopotamian belief 432,000 years elapsed between the crowning of the first earthly king and the coming of the deluge.

The early Sumerian king list names eight kings with a total of 241,200 years from the time when "the kingship was lowered from heaven" to the time when "the Flood swept" over the land once more "the kingship was lowered from heaven" (Thorkild Jacobsen, The Sumerian King List, 1939, pp. 71, 77).

A Biblical analysis of the Masoretic text of the ages of the Patriarchs when their sons were born shows only 1,656 years passed from the Creation to Adam's Fall until the Deluge and Shem's fatherhood.

Genesis 6:4 "There were giants in the earth in those days..., when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men (Nephilim) which were of old, men of renown."

"Sons of God appears to refer to angels (Job 1:6, 2:1 "a day when they came before the Lord, and Satan was among them"):

Job 38:7 "When the morning stars sang together, and they all shouted for joy"; Psalms 89:6 "... who among them can be likened unto the Lord?"). Genesis 6:1-2 may likewise involve angels (in this case they are fallen ones) or they may be demon-possessed individuals, but others view these "sons of God" as kings/rulers/princes.

Author W. Raymond Drake states that in the Kabalistic Book of Enoch the Giants engendered by the Fallen Angels and daughters of men turned against mankind before the Flood.

Noah and the Giants (Anakim or Annunaki) after the Flood.

Noah's three sons may have brought with them wives, who were not pure descendants of Adam but those of the Anakim (Heb. 'anaqim, sons of Anak, Heb. 'anaq, long-necked) or possibly the Canaanites. Or else after Ham and Japheth eventually became the ancestors of the "goyim," where they combined with the Anakim who survived the Flood. The early Sumerian texts called them Anunaki, "those who came from heaven to earth." The Anakim as in Genesis 6:4 they are the sons of the sons of God, they are called the Nephilim (uncertain etymology) or giants (Heb. rapha, raphah, Heb. gibbor, mighty, Rephaim of Canaan ancestor of Og, king of Bashan, Emims of the Moabites, Zamzummims of Ammonites, Heb. murmurers, Zuzites (Zuzim) in Gen. 14:5) who were of old, men of renown. This crossbreeding may be the reason why the ancestors believe that sexual relations could affect one's health. One might even suspect that the Anakim were possibly the Greek Gods of mythology "fallen angels" the original Hebrew "B'nai Elohim" some who did not survive the Flood.

Anaq as in Anakim verses Hanokh as in Enoch

Some Talmudic commentaries stated that the Anakim were the sons of Enoch. Enoch (Heb. hanokh, consecrated, Gr. Henoch). Genesis and the Talmud both suggest that the Giants, who resented God for destroying their ancestors, meddled in the affairs of mankind.

Eventually Nimrod seen in Genesis 10:8-10 "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be

a mighty one (first king) in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." Nimrod (Heb. nimroth, assumed "rebel"), a descendent of Ham, was responsible for building the city of Babel (Babylon). This individual was the beginning of the kingdom in Babylonia, and he became the founder of Nineveh and other cities in Assyria. He became distinguished as a hunter, ruler, and builder. He lived for an undetermined amount of centuries after the Flood, and was the grandson of Ham. He was a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded men not to ascribe to God, in order to bring them into a constant dependence upon his own power. He swore to build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! Thus avenging himself on God for destroying their forefathers!

Many legends have grown up around the name of Nimrod, some claiming that he was identical with "Ninus," an early Babylonian king or god (king of Assyria, founder of Nineveh, known in history as Shamshi-Adad V of 811 B.C.). Again, some have associated Nimrod with the building of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Others have identified him with the ancient king of Babylonia, Gilgamesh (Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh, 5th king of the 1st Dynasty of Erech after the Flood), but there is no proof that the two were identical. The Talmud stresses that while Esau (Heb. 'esaw, hairy) spent his days hunting and that an arrow from his bow killed the giant Nimrod (legends of "Ninus" or "Gilgamesh"). Did Nimrod finally die after all this time from Genesis 10 through 26?

Also attributed to him and his people were the building of Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Asshur, son of Nimrod, built Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah and Resen.

After the Flood in Sumer, Emmerkar, Lugalbanda (Lugulbanda) and Gilgamesh (estimated at 3,000 B.C.), were among the first kings of the city of Erech. The second, third, and fifth rulers of the First Dynasty of Erech, which followed the First Dynasty of Kish, which received the "kingship" from heaven immediately after the Flood. Some believe that this flood occurred in 4,000 B.C. and was a different one than compiled in the Genesis account. Lugalbanda was a god and shepherd king of Uruk (Erech) where he was worshipped for over a thousand years. Possibly the third king of Uruk after the great flood. Gilgamesh (Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh, 5th king of the 1st Dynasty of Erech after the Flood) presented Lugulbanda with the horns of the Bull of Heaven.

Around 3200 B.C. Menes was consolidating Upper and Lower Egypt, Sumer was prospering, and then the Semitic peoples appeared on the scene with Sargon (2550-2400 B.C.) conquering Erech (Uruk), Ur, E-Ninmar, Lagash, to the mountains of Elam, Crete and uniting the area. Sargon, king of Agade, vice regent of the goddess Ishtar, king of Kish, pashishu (a class of priest who prepared and applied ointments) of the god Anu, King of the Land, great ishakku (chief priest) of the god Enlil.

Also called "sons [children] of Anak" (Heb. 'anaq, long-necked) a descendant of Arba (Josh. 15:13) and ancestor of the Anakites (Anakim, Heb. 'anaqim, Num. 13:22, 28, 33). Arba (Heb. 'arba) the father of Anak, and founder of the city Kiriath Arba of Hebron (Josh 14:15; 15:13). The spies compared them to the giants of Genesis 6:4 (RSV, NIV, Nephilim); and possibly the Rephaites (Deut. 2:11, RSV, NIV).

In Numbers 13:22 the spies sent by Moses into Negeb and to Mount Hebron, ran into Ahiman (Heb. 'ahiman, my brother is a gift),

Sheshai (Heb. sheshay)

and Talmai (Heb. talmay, the founder of this family, note see Arba), the descendants of Anak,

with the references to looking like grasshoppers compared to them and were eventually driven out by Caleb and killed.

Emites (Heb. 'emim, Moabites called them "Terrors"; KJV, Emim) were the original inhabitants of Moab (Deut. 2:10-11, refer to Ar [Heb. 'ar, a city or district in Moab]). A powerful advanced civilization who were also tall of stature, so that they were, like the Anakim, called giants. In Genesis 14:5, Abram's time the Emites were defeated by the Mesopotamian invaders of Kedorlaomer (KJV Chedorlaomer was king of Elam) in Shaveh Kiriathaim (Heb. shaweh qiryathayim, the Plain of Kiriathaim, i.e., "twin cities"), a plain east of the Dead Sea (cf. Num 32:37).

Elam, (Sumerian inscriptions called it Numma, high mountain people, Elamtu in Akkadian text, Heb. 'elam, shushan, Gr. Susiana, Susa) was south of Media and east of Babylonia, its name came from the Semites (Gen. 10:22) but was inhabited chiefly by Indo-Europeans; later it became part of Persia, modern Iran.

During this time Amraphel (Heb. 'amraphel) was king of Shinar (Babylonia)

and Arioch (Eri-aku) was king of Ellasar (Heb. ellasar) in Syria, is the ancient Babylonian Larsa (with the last three letters transposed in Heb.), modern Senkereh, SE Babylon, between Erech and Ur.

Also a king named Tidal (Heb. tidh'al) was unidentified, mentioned only in Genesis 14:1, 9 where he is called "king of Goiim" ("nations," KJV) and is allied with three other kings, with Kedorlaomer king of Elam as the leader (14:5, 17). This was the group that Abram routed in a night raid to rescue Lot (14:15-16).

In Genesis 14:2, 8 these four kings made war with

Bera (Heb. bera', gift) king of Sodom, Sodoma (Heb. sedhom, Gr. Sodoma),

Birsha king of Gomorra (Heb. 'amorah, Gr. Gomorra, submersion, located in the Vale of Siddim),

Shinab (Heb. shin'av) king of Admah (Heb. 'adhmah, red earth, a Canaanite city),

Shemeber (Heb. shem'ever) king of Zeboiim (Heb. tsevo'im, gazelles, hyena),

and the king of Bela (Heb. bela', destruction, belay, Belah) or Zoar (Heb. tso'ar, little, alone escaped the destruction by fire from heaven by a prayer from Lot, an ancient Canaanite city called Bela),

all near the Dead Sea, or Salt Sea (Valley of Siddom, Heb. 'emeq hasiddim, the valley of the fields).

Goiim (goy'im) was also the area of an unnamed king defeated by Joshua (Josh. 12:23, "Goyim") Harosheth Haggoyim a town of "mixed races."

Heathen or Pagan (Heb. goy, pl. goyim, Gr. ethnos, people, nation). In Hebrew the plural ending is "-im" as a suffix it signifies nations, tribes, cities, or towns rather than individuals. [Abram + im].

Gentile (Heb. goy, plural goyim, nation, people), Goy means a non-Israelite, heathen or the pagan world.

In the NT, nations the Greek ethnos is equal to goy, while people is laos and is equal to the Hebrew 'am. When God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Heb. Yisra'el, he strives with God and prevails) the Hebrew word 'am is the ordinary term for Israel, the people of God.

Rephaite, Rephaim (Heb. repha'im, mighty) a name of a giant people, called also Rephainer (Gen. 14:5; 15:20 "the dispossessed" KJV), who lived in Canaan before the time of Abram. They were like the Anakim in Deut. 2:11, 20.

Og (Heb. 'ogh), Amorite king of Bashan, was a descendant of the Rephaites (Josh. 12:4; 13:12). Og, the last king of the race, was defeated and killed by the Israelites at Edrei in the time of Moses (Num 21:33-35; Deut 3:1-7). His sarcophagus of iron (black basaltic rock) was nearly fourteen feet long and six feet wide, which was said to be from Rabbath-Ammon (Ammonite), today Amman, capital of Jordan.

Zamzummite, Zamzummim (Heb. zamzummin, murmurers) found only in Deut. 2:20 and described as "a people strong and numerous, and ...tall" (Deut. 2:21). They were a race of giants, called Rephaim (2 Sam 5:18, 22), who lived in a spot east of the Jordan.

They may be the same as the Zuzites (Zuzim) in Genesis 14:5.

Zuzim, Zuzites (Heb. zuzim) a primitive race of giants conquered by Kedorlaomer and his allies at Ham, an unknown place east of the Jordan; in the days of Abram (Genesis 14:5; Zuzites NIV; Zuzim JB, MLB, NASB, NEB, RSV; Zuzims KJV).

Remnants of the Anakim remained in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod even in the time of Joshua (1500-1390 B.C.) as seen in Joshua 11:21 "And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities." 11:22 "There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained (remnants)."

Joshua's battle to annihilate them from the land set the future stage of events.

David was the second king of Judah and Israel between 1,010-962 B.C., he slew the Philistine giant Goliath (Heb. golyath, was from Gath), who was nine feet tall, possibly eleven depending on the length of a cubit, and probably was one of the Anakites. (Num. 13:33; Josh 11:22.)

The book of Samuel (2 Samuel 21:15-20.) also tells of other Rephaim. David and his men also killed three of them besides Goliath:

Benob (Ishbi-benob, Heb. yishbi venov) whose spear weighed three hundred shekels;

Saph (Heb. saph, a basin, threshold, a Philistine giant, of the race of Rapha,

"Sippai" in 1 Chron 20:4) who died in the battle of Gob;

and the brother of Goliath, the Gittite (of Gath), a phenomenal man whose name is not given "a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all."

On December 5, 2005 I found an article in the newspaper claiming the following:
Small fragment has Goliath implications

Archaeologists excavating the ancient Philistine city of Gath have unearthed a ceramic fragment inscribed with two names possibly linked to Goliath, the first solid indication that the famous biblical confrontation with David has a historical context.

Aren Maier, of Israel's Bar-Ilan University, said the fragment bears the Indo-European names Alwt and Wlt written in ancient proto-Canaanite script, the forerunner of modern Hebrew and other Semitic scripts. Maier said scholars believe that Goliath is a derivative of such Indo-European names.

Maier said the fragment is the oldest known Philistine inscription found in Israel. Archaeologists date it to about 950 B.C., probably between 70 and 100 years after biblical chronology suggests David slew the Philistine giant with a stone from a slingshot.

While the fragment almost certainly has nothing to do with Goliath, Maier said it shows the Bible story has "cultural context" rooted in the ancient Middle East and is not necessarily a legend written down years after the event allegedly happened.

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James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"

The Euphrates River

Facts about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2002-3

'Buranunu' in Sumerian
'Purattu' in Akkadian
'Perath' in Hebrew
'Ufrat' in ancient Persian
'Euphrates' in Greek
'Al-Furât' in Arabic
'Firat' in Turkish

The Euphrates Today

The Euphrates River is 1,725 miles long, beginning in the Armenian plateau of Turkey. In Iraq, it flows across land laid down by alluvial deposits, a surface that is very flat. As far as 300 miles north of the Arabian/Persian Gulf, the surface of the land rises only 60 feet above the level of the Gulf. The result of this flatness is that the river easily floods and often changes course. It is easy to deflect river water onto the land for irrigation but difficult to drain the land afterwards, causing the fields to become increasingly saline. In the case of permanent flooding, the terrain becomes a marsh.

Flooding on the Euphrates is caused by the melting of snow in the Armenian plateau. The lower Euphrates begins to rise at the end of March and usually reaches its maximum height by the end of May. The water level then gradually drops throughout the summer until it reaches its lowest level at the end of November.

The Euphrates is navigable from the Lower Sea (Arabian/Persian Gulf) to a series of rapids at Ana, just above Hit, where major bitumen springs are located. At Hit, the Euphrates is 750 feet wide. Below Hit, the width of the river narrows and averages 450 to 500 feet. The current of the lower Euphrates is very slow, not normally exceeding one mile per hour and often falling to a quarter of that speed. However, during spring flooding, the speed of the flow can increase to as much as five miles per hour.

Today, the Euphrates divides into two branches below Museyib, the primary or western branch called the Hindiya and the secondary or eastern branch called the Hilla.

The Euphrates in Ancient Times

The ancient Euphrates, which seems to have coursed about forty miles to the east of the present-day course, also appears to have had two branches. The primary branch, the western branch, flowing by Sippar, Nippur, Kisurra, Shuruppak, Uruk, Enegi, Ur, and Kuara, was most often referred to as the Euphrates River or the River of Sippar. The secondary branch, the shallower eastern branch, flowing by Adab, Dabrum, KI.AN, Zabalam, Umma, Nagsu, Bad-tibira, Larsa and Uruk was referred to as the Iturungal or the Iturungal Canal, due to the continual maintenance necessary to keep it open and navigable.

The Mouth of the Euphrates

Today the Euphrates joins the Tigris at Qurna and flows to the Arabian (or Persian) Gulf through the Shatt al Arab. In Sumerian times, the Euphrates flowed directly into the Gulf which was then called the Lower Sea (also called the Bitter Sea and the Sea of the Rising Sun).

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The Tigris River

Facts about Ancient Sumer

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'Idigna' in Sumerian
'Idiklat' in Akkadian
'Hiddekel' in Hebrew
'Dijla' in Arabic
'Dicle' in Turkish
'Tigris' in Latin

The Tigris River is 1,150 miles long and begins on the Armenian plateau in Turkey. In Iraq, it receives additional water from four important tributaries: the Greater Zab, the Lesser Zab, the Adhem and the Diyala. As a result, the Tigris is more subject to catastrophic flooding than the Euphrates. Annual flooding usually results in the Tigris rising from 4½ to 9 feet, with a record rise of 27 feet in 1954.

The Tigris is navigable as far north as Mosul (near ancient Ninevah). In flood season, native rafts on floats, with loads as great as 35 tons, float the 275 miles between Mosul and Baghdad in three or four days. At Baghdad, the wood is sold and the skins for the floats are carried back upriver on the backs of donkeys. There is little traffic going upriver.

At Kut, the Tigris is about 1,300 feet wide and has a depth varying from a normal 4½ feet to 26 feet when flooding. The current at Kut ranges from 1¼ to as high as 4 miles per hour when flooding.

At Amara, the Tigris is only 600 feet wide with a depth ranging from a normal 6½ feet to 13 feet when flooding. Marshlands, starting near Amara, drain off much of the river water so that at Qurna, the depth remains the same but the river narrows to a width of only 200 feet.

Although the upper reaches of the Tigris are higher than the Euphrates, in southern Iraq the bed of the Tigris is lower than that of the Euphrates and the canals between the two rivers have their tailings in the Tigris, causing the water in these canals to flow from west to east..

Sometimes, at low water during midsummer, the lower Tigris has a depth of only 3 feet but, due to its many tributaries, the river is subject to sudden flooding.

The Tigris and Euphrates meet just below Qurna, from which point the Tigris is called the Shatt al Arab and is full of marshy water from the Euphrates and surrounding marshes. The combined waterway is 30 feet deep and more than 1,200 feet wide.

Rainfall at Basra is only 6½ inches a years, of which 5½ inches fall between April and October.

Two types of native boats were used on the Tigris River and Shatt al Arab, a round skin boat (skins stretched over a frame of willow branches) known as a coracle (Arabian = Quffa, Akkadian = Quppu) and a rectangular raft type known as a riverboat (Arabian = Kelek, Akkadian = Kalakku). The coracles principally go downriver but riverboats can be poled or towed upstream. With proper rigging, riverboats can also be sailed and rowed.

Like the Euphrates, the course of the lower Tigris has meandered and changed over the years. In ancient days, the Tigris either flowed where the Shatt al Gharraf is today, or the Tigris had a branch that flowed down the Shatt al Gharraf or, possibly, the Shatt al Gharraf started as a manmade canal through the marshes and the Tigris overflowed into it. The sites of the ancient cities of Girsu and Lagash are located on today's Shatt al Gharraf.

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The Tigris-Euphrates
Marshlands

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

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Until the marshes of southern Iraq were drained during the last decade of the twentieth century, the average depth of water in the marshes during flood season was 3 to 5 feet with a maximum of 6 to 10 feet. Water depth during the summertime was less, completely drying up in some seasonal areas. The water in most marshes and lakes was fresh, but the water in Haur Al Hammar, the lake closest to the sea, was brackish.

During the hot, dry summers, daily marshland temperatures ranged from 68° at night to 104° Fahrenheit during the day with a maximum high of 122°. In the cold, wet winters, daily temperatures averaged from 41° to 59° Fahrenheit with a low of 12° F. Water temperatures in the marshes and lakes fluctuated from a low of 61° Fahrenheit in the winter to a high of 88° F midsummer.

Vegetation in the marshes of southern Iraq was dominated by the Common Reed (which grows 6 to 12 feet tall) and dominated the permanent marsh. Bulrush (cattails growing 3 to 6 feet tall) dominated the seasonal marshes. Cyperus Sedge was found throughout the marshes. The marshes had rich, spongy underwater vegetation while water lilies and duckweed covered a good part of the surface. The underwater vegetation supported shrimp and many species of fish while reeds, rushes and sedges supported diverse breeds of birds and wildfowl.

Many large mammal species were found in the marshes at the end of the twentieth century: wild boar, otter, jackal, red fox, Indian mongoose, gray wolf, honey badger, striped hyena, goitred gazelle and Indian crested porcupine. But lions had been wiped out early in the century when World War I introduced rifles to the area.

Small mammals found in the marshes at the end of the century included rats, mice, gerbils, hedgehogs and bandicoots.

The marshlands had long been inhabited. At mid twentieth century, the area of the marshlands fluctuated between 15,000 sq km (5,800 sq miles) and 20,000 sq km (7,700 sq miles). They were divided into three marshes: the Al Hammar Marsh which was south of the Euphrates River and included Haur Al Hammar Lake, the Central Marsh

between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and the Al Hawizeh Marsh east of the Tigris River, on the Iraqi-Iranian border.

The native inhabitants of the marshes numbered up to 500,000 and were called Marsh Arabs, or Ma'dan. They and their domesticated water buffalo, introduced as early as c. 3500 BCE, farmed in the marshes.

After Saddam Hussain crushed the Shi'ite Revolt of March-April, 1991 in southern Iraq, the marshlands became a refuge for Shi'ites as well as Iraqi deserters from the Gulf War. The result was that the Iraqi government, starting in 1992, led by Saddam Hussain, built a system of dams, rivers and a canal, to drain the marshlands.

This series of developments was christened 'The Project of the Mother of Battles' and consisted of a 350-mile long canal named the 'Saddam River' (1992) that passed underneath the Euphrates River in an inverted siphon to keep water out of the Haur Al Hammar lake, the 'Mother of Battles River' (1994), a half-mile wide 'Prosperity River' that drains the Central Marsh and a 55-mile long 'Fidelity to the Leader Canal' (1997). As of the end of the twentieth century, the marshlands had been 95% drained, leaving behind a land that was desiccated and salt encrusted.

To read an English translation of Christ Kutschera's article on 'The Project of the Mother of Battles,' [click here](#).

To read an extremely detailed eyewitness account of 'The Project of the Mother of Battles' drainage program, [click here](#).

For a CIA map (ca 1994) showing the changes in the marshlands of southern Iraq, [click here](#).

The UN has issued an excellent 58-page report of the project entitled 'The Mesopotamian Marshlands: Demise of an Ecosystem.' The entire report, filled with photographs and maps, is available online in PDF format. [Click here](#).

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The Tigris-Euphrates

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Many large mammal species were found in the marshes at the end of the twentieth century: wild boar, otter, jackal, red fox, Indian mongoose, gray wolf, honey badger, striped hyena, goitred gazelle and Indian crested porcupine. But lions had been wiped out early in the century when World War I introduced rifles to the area.

Small mammals found in the marshes at the end of the century included rats, mice, gerbils, hedgehogs and bandicoots.

The marshlands had long been inhabited. At mid twentieth century, the area of the marshlands fluctuated between 15,000 sq km (5,800 sq miles) and 20,000 sq km (7,700 sq miles). They were divided into three marshes: the Al Hammar Marsh which was south of the Euphrates River and included Haur Al Hammar Lake, the Central Marsh between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and the Al Hawizeh Marsh east of the Tigris River, on the Iraqi-Iranian border.

The native inhabitants of the marshes numbered up to 500,000 and were called Marsh Arabs, or Ma'dan. They and their domesticated water buffalo, introduced as early as c. 3500 BCE, farmed in the marshes.

After Saddam Hussain crushed the Shi'ite Revolt of March-April, 1991 in southern Iraq, the marshlands became a refuge for Shi'ites as well as Iraqi deserters from the Gulf War. The result was that the Iraqi government, starting in 1992, led by Saddam Hussain, built a system of dams, rivers and a canal, to drain the marshlands.

This series of developments was christened 'The Project of the Mother of Battles' and consisted of a 350-mile long canal named the 'Saddam River' (1992) that passed underneath the Euphrates River in an inverted siphon to keep water out of the Haur Al Hammar lake, the 'Mother of Battles River' (1994), a half-mile wide 'Prosperity River' that drains the Central Marsh and a 55-mile long 'Fidelity to the Leader Canal' (1997). As of the end of the twentieth century, the marshlands had been 95% drained, leaving behind a land that was desiccated and salt encrusted.

To read an English translation of Christ Kutschera's article on 'The Project of the Mother of Battles,' [click here](#).

To read an extremely detailed eyewitness account of 'The Project of the Mother of Battles' drainage program, [click here](#).

For a CIA map (ca 1994) showing the changes in the marshlands of southern Iraq, [click here](#).

The UN has issued an excellent 58-page report of the project entitled 'The Mesopotamian Marshlands: Demise of an Ecosystem.' The entire report, filled with photographs and maps, is available online in PDF format. [Click here](#).

The End

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SADDAM'S SCHEME TO DRAIN THE MARSHES

In 1992 SCIRI obtained a copy of Saddam's plan to drain the marshlands of southern Iraq when its fighters captured an engineer working on the site which is reproduced here. Official documents, in addition to special maps, give a detailed account of operations on the ground, as well as the plan to drain the marshlands and its consequences in various areas. The documents reveal that the plan has five stages.

Stage one: River Engineering Works.

Site of the operation: Amara province.

Objective: To establish earth dykes 6 - 18 km in length on the banks of the main rivers which supply the marshlands.

The seven rivers affected by the operation are: AL Wadiah, AL Adil, AL Kifa, Ash-Shermekhiah, Mesbah, Haddam and Um Jidi.

Progress of the operation: this stage was completed in July 1992.

Consequences: diverting the waters of tributaries which supply the marshlands. The land on both sides of the river banks south of Amarah has been deprived of water. This situation has been aggravated by the introduction of water level controllers on the Tigris which severely limit the flow of water. 'Re regulators were first used on the Al Majr AL Kabir and AL Bitaria rivers, resulting in the cutting off of water to AL Maimouna, As-

Salam, AL Adil and AL Majr AL Kabir towns.

Stage two: Engineering the River Banks Objective: to establish two banks at the ends of all the rivers and their tributaries to limit the flow and outflow of water to the main river.

Site of the operation: Amarah province.

1. This project begins south of AL Jandallah village (AL Salam town) and spans the length of Abu Ashrah village (AL Adil town) and continues towards Abu Ajil village to join the two banks which were established during the Iraq-Iran war between Abu Ajil and Beni Mansour where it finally meets the Euphrates six kilometres west of AL- Qurneh town.

Description of the two banks (from the West to the East)

Width of the southern bank: 35m at the bottom, 8m at the top.

Width of the upper bank: 25m at the bottom, 8m at the top.

Height of the two banks: 6m.

Distance between the two banks: 1200m at AL Jendallah village (AL Salam town), 1,400m at Abu AL Jawatil (AL Adil town) , 1,600m at Abu Ajil town and 2,000m (from Abu Ajil to Beni Mansour). -Length of the two banks: 90 kms -Completion date: July 1992

Results of the operation: cutting off more than 40 rivers and tributaries and diverting them towards the east. This led to:

1- Depletion of drinking water and water essential for agricultural activities.

2. Lowering the water level in Amarah marsh. Organisation supervising the project:

Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialisation, Ministry of Housing and Construction, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Stage three: Diversion of the Euphrates to AL Masab AL Aam.

Site of the operation: Nasiriyah province. Objective: Diversion of the Euphrates waters from AL-Fdhailiah (five kms east of Nasiriyah to AL Masab AL Aam). The tributaries of Masab AL Aam will be linked. It is well known that these waters end at the Gulf at Khor Abdullah. This operation was completed early in July, 1992.

Result of the operation: Diversion of the Euphrates waters from its source starting from Nasiriyah town towards AL Masab AL Aam to drain AL Hamar marsh. The diversion of the natural and historical course of the Euphrates starting from Nasiriyah-Al Qurnah to a lower-level canal to drain Amarah marshland.

Stage four: Shouldering the Euphrates River

Site of the operation: Nasiriyah province and Basrah province.

The dam in this case is located between Medainah (at lines 715 east and 342 to the north) and Nasiriyah, passing through AL-Chibaish, which is located at lines 692 east to 342 north. Purpose of this stage: prevention of the flow of water from Euphrates to Hamar marsh, through the setting up of an earth dam parallel to the river Euphrates.

Specification of the dam: width from below is 25m and at top 6m, height 5.7m, length

145m.

Consequences of this stage: cutting off the flow of water from several rivers, which feed to Hamar marsh. These rivers include Saleh, Antar, Khaerah, Khargeah, in addition to certain tributaries and other smaller streams, while the population of these areas are deprived from the water that they require for both irrigation and domestic use.

Progress of work: the regime has benefited from falling water levels in Hamar marsh, as a direct result of the third stage. Also, the two banks of the water flow became apparent, something which made it possible to set up an earthy barrier over these two banks.

The regime has utilised the dam between AL-Qurneh and Medainah (20kms) which was implemented during the Iran-Iraq war. This is called the "Hemaiah Dam". Also, another 20 kilometres has been performed between Medainah and a point some 5 kilometres to AL-Chibaish, and what remains is the distance between this point and AL-Nasiriyah, i.e. some 100 kilometres, which is now under construction.

Stage five: Division of the Marshes

Site of the operation: Amarah province and Basrah province.

Objective of operation: division of the marshes through several barriers and as a prelude to drying them up. The important steps in this regard are:

1- Establishment of an earthy dam starting from Abu-Saboor village at lines 711 east and 347 north.

This dam will extend to the west till AL-Saboor village at lines 696 east and 347 north. It also extends to the south west till a point falling at line 693 east and 346 north. It also continues to the south for some 40 kilometres, so as to meet the Euphrates at lines 696 east and 342 north, then to the south for some 18kms, and then to the south east and east to finish at lines 718 east and 340 north.

2-The regime has benefited from a number of dams which were set up during the war with Iran. Among these is the water barrier starting from a point at lines 718 east and 340 north, and continuing for 11 kilometres to the north, i.e. Lip to "AL-Ibrah" village, then it bends towards the east north and west to form a semi-circle. Consequences: Some 1500 square kilometres has been dried up through this stage alone.

Conclusion

The various stages spelt out above have one single objective. This is to destroy the environment of the marshes and break the resistance of their people. These stages are aimed at drying up the marshes, and have been accompanied by a great deal of violence on the part of the authorities, where brutal force is utilised extensively to ensure the implementation of these stages, where the whole plan is shrouded utmost secrecy. The people of the marshes have suffered greatly as a result, and are still suffering. Water has become very scarce in certain areas, while in others it has become virtually unobtainable. All this is causing dire consequences for agriculture, animal rearing and human consumption. In addition, hundreds of thousands of inhabitants have fled their areas, so as to escape this new situation that has devastated their environment.

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The Mesopotamian Marshlands: Demise of an Ecosystem

UNEP Study Sounds Alarm about the Disappearance of the Mesopotamian Marshlands
Despite intermittent warnings against the imminent decline of the Mesopotamian marshlands, there has been little immediate action to avoid such a fate. Iraq's difficult situation in the past decade has limited access to and hindered monitoring of events in the marshlands. As a result, this major ecological disaster, broadly comparable in extent and rapidity to the drying of the Aral Sea and the deforestation of large tracts of Amazonia, has gone virtually unreported until now.

"There is no doubt that the disappearance of the Mesopotamian marshlands represents a major environmental catastrophe that will be remembered as one of humanity's worst engineered disasters. It is a devastating account embodying in many respects the environmental crises of our times. This disaster encompasses disputes over water rights; pollution; threats to indigenous communities and to archaeological sites; human rights, environmental refugees and war damages; and declining populations of migratory birds and coastal fisheries.

It is hoped that this report will act as a clarion call, sparking fresh debate and opening new lines of communication between Tigris-Euphrates riparian countries, encouraging them to come together and share their precious rivers in a peaceful, socially-equitable and environmentally-sustainable manner."

Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director

This report is available to download in PDF format (1.05 Mb)

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Ancient Sumeria
"And their descendents living
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The way the marshlands of Iraq once looked.

Problems with the Iraqi
Marshlands
and their Reclamation

On May 1, 2003, speaking from the deck of the USS Lincoln, President George W. Bush declared an end to combat hostilities in Iraq. After 43 days, the war that started with a 'Shock and Awe' attack on Baghdad in the early hours of March 19th, was over.

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In terms of devastation, the greatest occurred in southern Iraq predated the war. It had occurred years before. There, Saddam Hussein, as president of Iraq, destroyed 90% of the 20,000 sq km of marshland (7,500 square miles—an area the size of the state of Massachusetts).

In 1991, following the Gulf War, the Marsh Arabs, known as Ma'dan, joined the failed Shi'ite uprising. While the revolt on dry land was easily crushed by Hussein's troops, the Ma'dan remained largely unreachable. This was how they had survived for thousands of years. Whenever enemies came, they destroyed small dams built to control the flow of the rivers and retreated deep within the marshes where, surrounded by water and near-impenetrable beds of reeds, they waited for their attackers to give up and leave.

But the 1990s were different. Iraqi forces pursued, strafing them from helicopter gunships, until the adoption of a southern 'No Fly Zone' in 1992. After that, heavy artillery and weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons such as napalm and phosphorous, were used to clear the villagers. The government instituted an economic blockade of the marshlands, denying all access to medicines and medical care. Often those who survived were removed at gunpoint.

They were accused of joining opposition parties and participating in anti-government activities. Frequently, there was no foundation for such charges and Marsh Arabs arriving at the Abu Ghraib prison seemed dazed and helpless. According to former Captain Al-Janabi, a former Iraqi intelligence officer, in one day alone, two thousand prisoners, mainly Marsh Arabs, were executed. The ex-captain says many were buried at a nearby cemetery in a special section where only numbers were used for identification. The bodies of others were returned to their families for burial.

Generally, the regime was reluctant to give bodies back as it disrupted the secrecy of its proceedings. Victims' families expected executions to be preceded by lengthy court hearings and to be documented in public records. Such records never existed for those Ma'dan arbitrarily arrested and killed.

The UN special envoy reported to the United Nations in 1994 that Iraqi government forces were conducting systematic military actions against the Marsh Arabs, attacking towns, killing or wounding civilians, then destroying their farms and houses. According to the diplomat's report, those who were arrested were blindfolded and abducted. Some of those arrested survived, albeit after undergoing horrific acts of torture lasting weeks or months; however, many were never heard from again. Rape was common.

Even after Hussein's army had quashed the revolt by slaughtering thousands of Ma'dan and attacking their villages, the Iraqi president was still bent on retribution. Under the guise of increasing agricultural acreage, he ordered the marshes drained.

To do this, he approved the construction of a massive network of canals, pipelines and

dams. State-owned businesses and private firms were required to dispatch all their earth-moving equipment to work on the projects. Sunnis from Hussein's strongholds in central Iraq, including Tikrit and Fallujah, were encouraged to travel south to help.

The engineering feat was enormous—and remarkably successful. The Euphrates, which had flowed entirely into the southern half of the marshes, was diverted into a wide new canal called the Mother of All Battles River that stretched more than 100 miles around the former wetlands. Higher up the Euphrates, billions of gallons of water were redirected into a depression in the desert.

Environmentalists classified Saddam's draining of the marshes as a major ecological disaster, broadly comparable in extent and rapidity to the drying of the Aral Sea. However, in Saddam's case, the drainage was without any rational justification. What was left, after the land was drained, has been described as mostly desert with large salt-encrusted areas.

By 1999, according to the Brookings Institution, all but a handful of the 250,000 Marsh Arabs had been driven into exile or killed. The United Nations estimated in 2001 that "40,000 had made it into Iran as refugees, 20-40,000 still inhabited the remaining part of the marshes and 170,000 to 190,000 Marsh Arabs were either dead or displaced."

In 1994, Joseph Dellapenna, a professor at Villanova University Law School and an expert on international water rights, said Saddam Hussein, besides his other crimes, is "... also guilty of genocide against the Marsh Arabs."

Dellapenna noted that Hussein had ostensibly drained the marshes for agricultural purposes but had done nothing to develop the reclaimed land, leaving it to turn into a barren and salt-covered desert. This, more than anything else, Dellapenna told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, revealed the true intentions of the Iraqi leader. "What makes this a crime under international law was its purpose," he said. "And I think the purpose was fairly clear, which was to destroy a culture and to destroy a people. And that's genocide. And genocide is an international crime. It's a crime against humanity." Dellapenna said it was also an ecological crime, what he calls "ecocide," but noted there is no legal instrument under international law to prosecute anyone for the destruction of a unique ecological system.

In 2002, an analysis of Landsat satellite images showed the marshlands had shrunk 30% further, from 1084 square kilometers (418 square miles) in 2000 to 759 (293 square miles) in 2002. At this rate of loss, it was calculated that the marshes would vanish entirely within five years. In addition, in late 2002, Iraqi troops set fire to reeds on the Iraqi side of the al-Hawaizeh marsh (located along the Iraqi-Iranian border), possibly preparing for a renewed military assault on the last remaining Ma'dan villages.

In retrospect, it seems Saddam Hussein actually had three reasons for draining the marshes. First, was to improve military access to a remote border area which had been the scene of fierce fighting during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. Second, the Shi'as, encouraged by the United States, had openly rebelled against the government in 1991. Third, Baghdad had begun negotiations in 1992 with international oil companies who, in spite of international sanctions, were willing to do business with Saddam Hussein, in the development of new oil fields near the marshes.

Remarking on the new oil fields, Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the former French president, denounced the persecution and removal of the Marsh Arabs. She criticized the French, Chinese and Russian oil companies who were working with the Hussein

regime to exploit oil in the southern marshes. She also lambasted the UN Security Council for passing puny resolutions that offered so little help. Mme. Mitterrand noted that while UNSCR 688 called for Iraq to "end its oppressive practices," article VII of the same resolution stated, "... objectives should be realized with the Iraqi government's cooperation." As she pointed out, "It was unlikely that Saddam Hussein would comply with, or have reason to fear, the resolution."

In March, 1995, the European Parliament adopted a resolution deploring the drainage of the marshes and the attacks upon the marsh dwellers. This resolution specifically refuted the assertion made by Hussein's government that the marshes were being drained for agricultural purposes and demanded that impartial observers be given a right of access to the marshes. Right of access was never granted.

Strangely, usually aggressive environmental groups took little public notice of the destruction of the marshes. When the war to oust Saddam Hussein started, Greenpeace International listed on its website as one of the five reasons for opposing the war that the conflict would "have devastating human and environmental consequences."

However, new groups had been organized to help the Ma'dan refugees and to try to bring to a stop the continuing destruction of the marshlands.

The first to become directly involved with the plight of the Sh'ia living in the marshes was Assisting Marsh Arabs and Refugees (AMAR), a British nonprofit organization founded in 1991 by Baroness Emma Nicholson. The baroness was at the time a Conservative member of the British Parliament. (She later became a British member of the

European Parliament.) Within a few years, AMAR had built a structure to help support the 95,000 Marsh Arabs who had taken refuge in Iran, providing them with basic health care, clean water and essential education services. Also, during the years of Saddam's rule, AMAR monitored the difficulties facing the 30,000 Marsh Arabs being steadily squeezed into the shrinking remnant of the al-Hawaizeh marsh and attempted to publicize the inhumane actions of the Iraqi government.

In that same year, 1991, the Iraq Foundation, an American 501(C)3 non-profit corporation, was established in the United States by and for Marsh Arab expatriates. In 2003, Mr. and Mrs. Azzam Alwash, board members of the Iraq Foundation, working with the US State Department, set up a program named 'Eden Again Project' to assist those expats who wanted to return to their homes in the reclaimed marshlands. As set up, the project envisioned the marshlands being restored in their entirety.

In the spring of 2003, while the war was still in progress, the reflooding of the marshes got some inadvertent help from the Iraqi Army. Responding to Saddam's orders to destroy roads in the area in an attempt to prevent British forces from reaching Basra, Iraqi troops accidentally blew up one of his dams. As a result, 25 square kilometers of drained marshland were immediately reflooded. The destruction of that dam inspired Marsh Arabs to start destroying other dams and dykes themselves, so that a sizable area was reflooded by the end of the war.

Afterwards, Iraqi state irrigation engineers, returning to work under Coalition Authority, further helped revive the marshlands by opening the gates of one dam on the Euphrates and smashing some of the bulwarks that had diverted much of that river's water into The Mother of All Battles River. On its side of the border, Iran helped by opening a dam to assist in the reflooding.

In the summer of 2003, Baroness Nicholson said an organized effort was needed to get heavy earth-moving equipment to fully disassemble the network of canals, pipelines and dams built to drain the marshes. She urged the United States to help.

The US State Department had already made a decision in 2002, before the war started, that if the opportunity occurred, they would do their best to assist the Marsh Arabs recover the marsh and their way of life. After the war ended, the State Department gave USAID, the overseas aid department of the US government, the task of making plans to help the Marsh Arabs.

A mission comprised of US scientists visited the marshlands in July and August of 2003, to sample the earth, water and air to see what help was needed. One of the questions that arose was how to reflood the land so as not to damage its chance for a full recovery.

Some US scientists, advising the US State Department, concluded the marshes were already beyond help and suggested that regeneration efforts would only make the

ecological situation worse.

Pekka Haavisto, chairman of the Iraq Task Force of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), said completely reconstituting Iraq's marshes would require enormous supplies of water. This was because the drained wetlands not only had to be reflooded, but first flushed clean of thick encrustations of salt that were left behind when their waters evaporated, else the result would not be a reclaimed marshland but a wasteland of lifeless salt ponds instead.

However, finding the required amounts of water would not be easy. The only sources were the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which had originally formed the marshlands. But those rivers no longer had the flow they once had because countries upstream built dams to harness the water for electricity and irrigation. For example, the flow of the Euphrates at Nasiriyah, which had measured 106,000 gallons per second before 1991, was down to 21,000 gallons per second because of new dams and irrigation canals built over the past decade.

The essential point for a restoration of any sizable part of the marshlands was the need for a basin-wide plan which would involve not only Iraq but also the other riparian countries drawing water from the Tigris and Euphrates: Turkey and Syria.

Fully reviving Iraq's marshes will require convincing Ankara and Damascus to release more water to Baghdad at the expense of development projects in their own countries. But the prospects of either state doing so are not good. Iraq, Syria, and Turkey already have a decades-long history of arguing over how to share regional waters. Reviving the marshlands will now become yet another chapter in that dispute. As Haavisto noted, there are few issues in the world as contentious as trans-boundary river problems and, in the Mideast, where water is a precious commodity, they are particularly thorny. "People who have experience with trans-boundary river problems are not too optimistic that these water-flow issues can be solved with the neighboring countries so the marshes could be refilled totally again. The most optimistic figure that I have heard would be around 30 percent recovery of the marshes."

Abandoned Ma'dan villages located in drained marshes look like Arab villages in any desert, including the middle of the Sahara. The only clues to their aquatic origins lie in crumbling, once-stately council houses, with cathedral-like spires, constructed entirely of bundles of reeds, now rotting.

"We broke the dams when the Iraqi army left," said Qasim Shalgan Lafta, 58, a former fisherman whose village sits marooned, along with a few cracked canoes, in a bleak landscape. "We want to teach our children how to fish, how to move on the water again."

On March 20, 2004 the Maysan Marsh Arab Council held its founding conference in Al Amarah to discuss the rehabilitation of Iraq's marshlands. The council's goal was to give the Ma'dan in Maysan Province a voice so their interests and concerns would be

factored into the national and international plans that affect the marshes. One of the major issues raised was the allocation of whatever arable lands were reclaimed.

Ma'dan expatriates are returning to their ancestral lands, but those returning don't have the resources to control the water or halt the pollution. Their health has been damaged by lack of clean drinking water and discharges of untreated sewage into rivers that feed the marshland. Some have called the rising floodwater an environmental disaster and accuse American and Iraqi officials of using them as political tools. "I don't see any of the politicians coming to live in the marshes," said one Marsh Arab.

"The draining of the marshes was a symbol of Saddam's misrule, now everyone wants to be the hero who brings the water back," said Dr. Ali Nassar, the director of AMAR, the organization working closely with extant Marsh Arab communities.

Of the 200,000 people displaced, only a few thousand of the poorest have returned, mostly from the slums outside Baghdad and other cities. For Faleh, a tribesman who lives with his family in a little reed hut on an island measuring ten yards by four, there is a simple reason why his kin don't want to return. Life in the marshland is harsh.

"It's all very well to idealize the simple life of the marshes, but Westerners forget that marsh children died of swamp fever and malaria," a tribal chieftain near Basra said. "For some people, it's better to live on dry land with electricity in houses that aren't regularly flooded, near roads that take you to the city in less than an hour. The marshes were romantic, but we paid a heavy price."

Some scientists are worried that the hasty reflooding may have already caused serious ecological damage by sopping up large quantities of salt.

Arabs living in the marshes fear the Iraqi provisional administration, after bringing back the waters, will now conveniently forget about them.

While doubts have been raised about the Iraqi transitional government, there are positive signs. The new environment ministry and Center for Restoration of the Iraqi Marshes are taking control of the project with enthusiasm. One member of the team will be Toronto-educated nuclear scientist Hussein Shahrstani, who turned down the job of Iraqi Prime Minister to accept a role as Director of the Iraq Academy of Science.

No one denies the problems are formidable. "The good news is that up to 35 per cent of the marshes have come back through haphazard efforts," Barry Warner of the Canadian International Development Agency says. "But the real question is, What is their long-term viability?"

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Even after Hussein's army had quashed the revolt by slaughtering thousands of Ma'dan and attacking their villages, the Iraqi president was still bent on retribution. Under the guise of increasing agricultural acreage, he ordered the marshes drained.

To do this, he approved the construction of a massive network of canals, pipelines and dams. State-owned businesses and private firms were required to dispatch all their earth-moving equipment to work on the projects. Sunnis from Hussein's strongholds in central Iraq, including Tikrit and Fallujah, were encouraged to travel south to help.

The engineering feat was enormous—and remarkably successful. The Euphrates, which had flowed entirely into the southern half of the marshes, was diverted into a wide new canal called the Mother of All Battles River that stretched more than 100 miles around the former wetlands. Higher up the Euphrates, billions of gallons of water were redirected into a depression in the desert.

Environmentalists classified Saddam's draining of the marshes as a major ecological disaster, broadly comparable in extent and rapidity to the drying of the Aral Sea. However, in Saddam's case, the drainage was without any rational justification. What was left, after the land was drained, has been described as mostly desert with large salt-encrusted areas.

By 1999, according to the Brookings Institution, all but a handful of the 250,000 Marsh Arabs had been driven into exile or killed. The United Nations estimated in 2001 that "40,000 had made it into Iran as refugees, 20-40,000 still inhabited the remaining part of the marshes and 170,000 to 190,000 Marsh Arabs were either dead or displaced."

In 1994, Joseph Dellapenna, a professor at Villanova University Law School and an expert on international water rights, said Saddam Hussein, besides his other crimes, is "... also guilty of genocide against the Marsh Arabs."

Dellapenna noted that Hussein had ostensibly drained the marshes for agricultural purposes but had done nothing to develop the reclaimed land, leaving it to turn into a barren and salt-covered desert. This, more than anything else, Dellapenna told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, revealed the true intentions of the Iraqi leader. "What makes this a crime under international law was its purpose," he said. "And I think the purpose was fairly clear, which was to destroy a culture and to destroy a people. And that's genocide. And genocide is an international crime. It's a crime against humanity." Dellapenna said it was also an ecological crime, what he calls "ecocide," but noted there is no legal instrument under international law to prosecute anyone for the destruction of a unique ecological system.

In 2002, an analysis of Landsat satellite images showed the marshlands had shrunk 30% further, from 1084 square kilometers (418 square miles) in 2000 to 759 (293 square miles) in 2002. At this rate of loss, it was calculated that the marshes would vanish entirely within five years. In addition, in late 2002, Iraqi troops set fire to reeds on the Iraqi side of the al-Hawaizeh marsh (located along the Iraqi-Iranian border), possibly preparing for a renewed military assault on the last remaining Ma'dan villages.

In retrospect, it seems Saddam Hussein actually had three reasons for draining the marshes. First, was to improve military access to a remote border area which had been the scene of fierce fighting during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. Second, the Shi'as, encouraged by the United States, had openly rebelled against the government in 1991. Third, Baghdad had begun negotiations in 1992 with international oil companies who, in spite of international sanctions, were willing to do business with Saddam Hussein, in the development of new oil fields near the marshes.

Remarking on the new oil fields, Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the former French president, denounced the persecution and removal of the Marsh Arabs. She criticized the French, Chinese and Russian oil companies who were working with the Hussein regime to exploit oil in the southern marshes. She also lambasted the UN Security Council for passing puny resolutions that offered so little help. Mme. Mitterrand noted that while UNSCR 688 called for Iraq to "end its oppressive practices," article VII of the same resolution stated, "... objectives should be realized with the Iraqi government's cooperation." As she pointed out, "It was unlikely that Saddam Hussein would comply with, or have reason to fear, the resolution."

In March, 1995, the European Parliament adopted a resolution deploring the drainage of the marshes and the attacks upon the marsh dwellers. This resolution specifically refuted the assertion made by Hussein's government that the marshes were being drained for agricultural purposes and demanded that impartial observers be given a right of access to the marshes. Right of access was never granted.

Strangely, usually aggressive environmental groups took little public notice of the destruction of the marshes. When the war to oust Saddam Hussein started, Greenpeace International listed on its website as one of the five reasons for opposing the war that the conflict would "have devastating human and environmental consequences."

However, new groups had been organized to help the Ma'dan refugees and to try to bring to a stop the continuing destruction of the marshlands.

The first to become directly involved with the plight of the Sh'ia living in the marshes was Assisting Marsh Arabs and Refugees (AMAR), a British nonprofit organization founded in 1991 by Baroness Emma Nicholson. The baroness was at the time a Conservative member of the British Parliament. (She later became a British member of the European Parliament.) Within a few years, AMAR had built a structure to help support the 95,000 Marsh Arabs who had taken refuge in Iran, providing them with basic health care, clean water and essential education services. Also, during the years of Saddam's rule, AMAR monitored the difficulties facing the 30,000 Marsh Arabs being steadily squeezed into the shrinking remnant of the al-Hawaizeh marsh and attempted to publicize the inhumane actions of the Iraqi government.

In that same year, 1991, the Iraq Foundation, an American 501(C)3 non-profit corporation, was established in the United States by and for Marsh Arab expatriates. In 2003, Mr. and Mrs. Azzam Alwash, board members of the Iraq Foundation, working with the US State Department, set up a program named 'Eden Again Project' to assist those expats who wanted to return to their homes in the reclaimed marshlands. As set up, the project envisioned the marshlands being restored in their entirety.

In the spring of 2003, while the war was still in progress, the reflooding of the marshes got some inadvertent help from the Iraqi Army. Responding to Saddam's orders to destroy roads in the area in an attempt to prevent British forces from reaching Basra, Iraqi troops accidentally blew up one of his dams. As a result, 25 square kilometers of drained marshland were immediately reflooded. The destruction of that dam inspired Marsh Arabs to start destroying other dams and dykes themselves, so that a sizable area was reflooded by the end of the war.

Afterwards, Iraqi state irrigation engineers, returning to work under Coalition Authority, further helped revive the marshlands by opening the gates of one dam on the Euphrates

and smashing some of the bulwarks that had diverted much of that river's water into The Mother of All Battles River. On its side of the border, Iran helped by opening a dam to assist in the reflooding.

In the summer of 2003, Baroness Nicholson said an organized effort was needed to get heavy earth-moving equipment to fully disassemble the network of canals, pipelines and dams built to drain the marshes. She urged the United States to help.

The US State Department had already made a decision in 2002, before the war started, that if the opportunity occurred, they would do their best to assist the Marsh Arabs recover the marsh and their way of life. After the war ended, the State Department gave USAID, the overseas aid department of the US government, the task of making plans to help the Marsh Arabs.

A mission comprised of US scientists visited the marshlands in July and August of 2003, to sample the earth, water and air to see what help was needed. One of the questions that arose was how to reflood the land so as not to damage its chance for a full recovery.

Some US scientists, advising the US State Department, concluded the marshes were already beyond help and suggested that regeneration efforts would only make the ecological situation worse.

Pekka Haavisto, chairman of the Iraq Task Force of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), said completely reconstituting Iraq's marshes would require enormous supplies of water. This was because the drained wetlands not only had to be reflooded, but first flushed clean of thick encrustations of salt that were left behind when their waters evaporated, else the result would not be a reclaimed marshland but a wasteland of lifeless salt ponds instead.

However, finding the required amounts of water would not be easy. The only sources were the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which had originally formed the marshlands. But those rivers no longer had the flow they once had because countries upstream built dams to harness the water for electricity and irrigation. For example, the flow of the Euphrates at Nasiriyah, which had measured 106,000 gallons per second before 1991, was down to 21,000 gallons per second because of new dams and irrigation canals built over the past decade.

The essential point for a restoration of any sizable part of the marshlands was the need for a basin-wide plan which would involve not only Iraq but also the other riparian countries drawing water from the Tigris and Euphrates: Turkey and Syria.

Fully reviving Iraq's marshes will require convincing Ankara and Damascus to release more water to Baghdad at the expense of development projects in their own countries. But the prospects of either state doing so are not good. Iraq, Syria, and Turkey already

have a decades-long history of arguing over how to share regional waters. Reviving the marshlands will now become yet another chapter in that dispute. As Haavisto noted, there are few issues in the world as contentious as trans-boundary river problems and, in the Mideast, where water is a precious commodity, they are particularly thorny. "People who have experience with trans-boundary river problems are not too optimistic that these water-flow issues can be solved with the neighboring countries so the marshes could be refilled totally again. The most optimistic figure that I have heard would be around 30 percent recovery of the marshes."

Abandoned Ma'dan villages located in drained marshes look like Arab villages in any desert, including the middle of the Sahara. The only clues to their aquatic origins lie in crumbling, once-stately council houses, with cathedral-like spires, constructed entirely of bundles of reeds, now rotting.

"We broke the dams when the Iraqi army left," said Qasim Shalgan Lafta, 58, a former fisherman whose village sits marooned, along with a few cracked canoes, in a bleak landscape. "We want to teach our children how to fish, how to move on the water again."

On March 20, 2004 the Maysan Marsh Arab Council held its founding conference in Al Amarah to discuss the rehabilitation of Iraq's marshlands. The council's goal was to give the Ma'dan in Maysan Province a voice so their interests and concerns would be factored into the national and international plans that affect the marshes. One of the major issues raised was the allocation of whatever arable lands were reclaimed.

Ma'dan expatriates are returning to their ancestral lands, but those returning don't have the resources to control the water or halt the pollution. Their health has been damaged by lack of clean drinking water and discharges of untreated sewage into rivers that feed the marshland. Some have called the rising floodwater an environmental disaster and accuse American and Iraqi officials of using them as political tools. "I don't see any of the politicians coming to live in the marshes," said one Marsh Arab.

"The draining of the marshes was a symbol of Saddam's misrule, now everyone wants to be the hero who brings the water back," said Dr. Ali Nassar, the director of AMAR, the organization working closely with extant Marsh Arab communities.

Of the 200,000 people displaced, only a few thousand of the poorest have returned, mostly from the slums outside Baghdad and other cities. For Faleh, a tribesman who lives with his family in a little reed hut on an island measuring ten yards by four, there is a simple reason why his kin don't want to return. Life in the marshland is harsh.

"It's all very well to idealize the simple life of the marshes, but Westerners forget that marsh children died of swamp fever and malaria," a tribal chieftain near Basra said. "For some people, it's better to live on dry land with electricity in houses that aren't regularly flooded, near roads that take you to the city in less than an hour. The marshes were romantic, but we paid a heavy price."

Some scientists are worried that the hasty reflooding may have already caused serious ecological damage by sopping up large quantities of salt.

Arabs living in the marshes fear the Iraqi provisional administration, after bringing back the waters, will now conveniently forget about them.

While doubts have been raised about the Iraqi transitional government, there are positive signs. The new environment ministry and Center for Restoration of the Iraqi Marshes are taking control of the project with enthusiasm. One member of the team will be Toronto-educated nuclear scientist Hussein Shahristani, who turned down the job of Iraqi Prime Minister to accept a role as Director of the Iraq Academy of Science.

No one denies the problems are formidable. "The good news is that up to 35 per cent of the marshes have come back through haphazard efforts," Barry Warner of the Canadian International Development Agency says. "But the real question is, What is their long-term viability?"

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James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"
Sumer, Sumeria and
Samaria Untangled

Facts about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2002-3

Grammatically speaking, 'Sumeria' is a modern day back formation from the words 'Sumer' and 'Sumerian.' A Sumerian was a native of the land of Sumer. 'Sumer,' which would have been more correctly translated as 'Shumer,' is the Biblical 'Shinar' mentioned in Genesis.

Like many ancient civilizations, ancient Sumer was a group of disparate city states, located mostly along a river ... the lower Euphrates in the plain of southern Mesopotamia, now Southern Iraq. As ancient Greece included the core city states of Athens, Sparta and far-off cities such as Miletus in Ionia, so ancient Sumeria included the core city states of Uruk and Ur and the far-off cities of Sippar in Akkad, Eshnunna in Warum, Susa in Elam and the Isle of Dilmun.

Archaeology dates the origin of the Sumerian civilization to ca 4000 BCE. This civilization invented writing (c. 3200 BCE) and ultimately culminated in the Semitic empire of Sargon the Great (c 2340 BCE). Sumer and the Sumerian language declined after 2000 BCE and the area was later absorbed successively by the empires of Babylonia, Assyria and Persia.

Samaria, on the other hand, was an area in ancient Palestine, a land of hills and valleys between Judea and Galilee. Most of Samaria is now part of the West Bank under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

In Biblical history, Omri, king of Israel (885-874 BCE), found a long hill near the city of Shechem (today's Nablus) with steep sides and a flat top that he liked. He bought the hill from its owner, Shemer, for two talents of silver and, in 880 BCE, built a city on it which he named Samaria after the property's former owner. This city of Samaria, only 35 miles from Jerusalem, was made the new capital of the kingdom of Israel. When Israel fell to the Assyrians in 721 BCE, the city of Samaria was depopulated.

In the time of Jesus, western Palestine was divided into three provinces, Judea,

Samaria, and Galilee, the central province being named after the ancient city of Samaria. When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity bringing the Torah with them, they found the Jews who had remained behind in Samaria refused to admit the books added and continued to accept only the first five books, the Pentateuch or the Books of Moses. This led to a deep theological split between Judeans and Samaritans.

In the Talmud, Samaria is called the 'Land of the Cuthim' and is not regarded as a part of the Holy Land. What makes the Biblical story of the 'The Good Samaritan' (Luke 10: 30-37) so exceptional, is that a Samaritan, an inhabitant of the province of Samaria, despised by the Jews of Judea, would nevertheless show such compassion for one of his neighbors.

Though they sound similar, Sumeria and Samaria are quite different, located more than a thousand miles apart in distance and more than a thousand years apart in time.

The End

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James W. Bell's
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The Sumerian King List

There are a number of versions of The Sumerian King List which do not always agree with each other. This version is based on an inscription on a block of stone found at the site of an ancient Sumerian city named Isin. It is an update of earlier Sumerian king lists, to add Isin's kings to Sumer's royal roster.

This list was inscribed during the reign of Damiqilishu of Isin (1816-1794 BCE). It presumed to be a list of kings from the beginning of history—when kingship was first handed down from Heaven. As the inscription was done only a few years before Hammurabi of Babylon captured the Land in the first half of the 18th century BCE and added it as a province to his new empire called Babylonia, it is virtually a complete list of the kings of the land once called Sumer.

The Sumerian King List is a mixture of fact and fantasy, including many historical kings confirmed by archaeology, but omitting others, and listing some contemporaneous dynasties as if they followed each other. The list below is paragraphed and formatted in modern style for ease of reading.

Kingship in Eridu

When kingship was first handed down from Heaven, the city of Eridu was chosen as the seat of kingship. In Eridu, Alulim ruled for 28,800 years as king and Alagar ruled for 36,000 years. The two kings ruled a total of 64,800 years and then kingship was removed to Bad-tibira.

Kingship in Bad-tibira

In Bad-tibira, Enmenluanna ruled 43,200 years, Enmengalanna ruled 28,800 years and Dumuzi, the shepherd, ruled 36,000 years. The three kings ruled a total of 108,000 years and then kingship was removed to Larak.

Kingship in Larak

In Larak, Ensipazianna ruled 28,800 years before kingship was removed to Sippar.

Kingship in Sippar

In Sippar, Enmeduranna ruled 21,000 years and then Sippar was abandoned and its kingship removed to Shuruppak.

Kingship in Shuruppak

In Shuruppak, Ubartutu ruled 18,600 years and then The Flood came.

The Flood

Eight kings in five cities ruled 241,200 years before The Flood swept over the land.

Kingship in Kish

After The Flood, kingship was handed down from Heaven a second time, this time to the city of Kish which became the seat of kingship.

In Kish, Gaur ruled 1,200 years; Gulla-Nidaba-annapad ruled 960 years; Palakinatim ruled 900 years; Nangishkushma ruled 670 years, 3 months and 3¹/₂ days;

Bahina ruled 300 years; Buanum ruled 840 years; Kalibum ruled 960 years; Galumum ruled 840 years; Zukakip ruled 900 years; Atab ruled 600 years; Mashda, the son of Atab, ruled 840 years; Arurim, the son of Mashda, ruled 720 years;

Etana, the shepherd who ascended to Heaven and made firm all the lands, ruled 1,560 years; Balih, the son of Etana, ruled 400 years;

Enmenunna ruled 660 years; Melam-Kish, the son of Enmenunna, ruled 900 years; Barsalnunna, the son of Enmenunna, ruled 1,200 years; Meszamug, the son of Barsalnunna, ruled 140 years; Tizkar, the son of Meszamug, ruled 305 years;

Ilku ruled 900 years; Iltasadum ruled 1,200 years; Enmebaraggesi, the king who smote the Land of Elam, ruled 900 years; Agga, the son of Enmebaraggesi, ruled 625 years.

All told, twenty-three kings ruled a total of 24,510 years, 3 months and 3¹/₂ days before Kish was defeated in battle and its kingship carried off to Eanna.

Kingship in Eanna

(Eanna later became part of the city of Uruk)

After kingship was brought to Eanna, Meskiaggasher, the son of the Sun God, Utu (Shamash), ruled as both lord and king for 324 years during which time he entered the sea and climbed the mountains; Enmerkar, the son of Meskiaggasher, the king of Uruk who had founded Uruk, ruled for 420 years;

Lugalbanda, the shepherd, ruled for 1,200 years; Dumuzi, the fisherman who came from the city of Kuara, ruled 100 years; Gilgamesh, whose father was a nomad (?), ruled 126 years; Urnungal, son of Gilgamesh, ruled 30 years; Udulkalamma, the son of Urnungal, ruled 15 years;

Labasher ruled 9 years; Ennundaranna ruled 8 years; Meshede, the smith, ruled 36

years; Melamanna ruled 6 years and Lugalkidul ruled 36 years.

All told, twelve kings ruled a total of 2,310 years in Eanna before Uruk was defeated in battle and its kingship carried off to Ur.

Kingship in Ur

After kingship was brought to Ur, Mesannepadda ruled for 80 years; Meskiagnunna, the son of Mesannepadda, ruled 36 years; Elulu ruled 25 years and Balulu ruled 36 years. All told, four kings ruled a total of 177 years before Ur was defeated in battle and its kingship carried off to Awan.

Kingship in Awan

After kingship was brought to Awan, (text destroyed) All told, three kings ruled a total of 356 years before Awan was defeated in battle and its kingship carried off to Kish.

Kingship in Kish (Second Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Kish, ruled (more than) 201 years; Dadasig ruled 81 years; Mamagal ruled 420 years; Kalbum, the son of Mamagal, ruled 132 years; Tuge ruled 360 years; Mennumna ruled 180 years; Lugalmu ruled 420 years and Ibbi-Ea ruled 290 (?) years. All told, eight kings ruled a total of 3,195 years before Kish was defeated in battle and its kingship carried off to Hamazi.

Kingship in Hamazi

After kingship was brought to Hamazi, Hadanish ruled 360 years before Hamazi was defeated and its kingship carried off to Uruk.

Kingship in Uruk (Including the ancient city of Eanna)

After kingship was brought to Uruk, Enshakanshanna ruled 60 years; Lugalure ruled 120 years and Argandea ruled 7 years. All told, three kings ruled a total of 187 years before Uruk was defeated and its kingship carried off to Ur.

Kingship in Ur (Second Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Ur, Nani ruled .. , Meshkiagnanna, son of Nani, ruled

.... (text destroyed) All told, four kings ruled a total of 116 (?) years before Ur was defeated and its kingship carried off to Adab.

Kingship in Adab

After kingship was brought to Adab, Lugalannemundu ruled 90 years before Adab was defeated and its kingship carried off to Mari.

Kingship in Mari

After kingship was brought to Mari, Ilshu ruled 30 years;, the son of Ilshu, ruled 17 years; Bazi, the leatherworker, ruled 30 years; Zizi, the fuller, ruled 20 years; Limer, the gudu priest, ruled 30 years and Sharrumiter ruled 9 years. All told, six kings ruled a total of 136 years before Mari was defeated and its kingship carried off to Kish.

Kingship in Kish (Third Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Kish again, Ku-Bau, the innkeeper, she who made firm the foundations of Kish, ruled for 100 years as 'king' before Kish was defeated and its kingship carried off to Akshak.

Kingship in Akshak

After kingship was brought to Akshak, Unzi ruled 30 years; Undalulu ruled 12 years; Urur ruled 6 years; Puzur-Nirah ruled 20 years; Ishu-II ruled 24 years and Shu-Sin, son of Ishu-II, ruled 7 years. All told, six kings ruled for a total of 99 years before Akshak was defeated and its kingship carried off to Kish.

Kingship in Kish (Fourth Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Kish, Puzur-Sin, son of Ku-Bau, ruled 25 years; Ur-Zababa, son of Puzur-Sin, ruled 400 years; Simudarra ruled 30 years; Usiwatar, son of Simudarra, ruled 7 years; Ishtar-muti ruled 11 years; Ishme-Shamash ruled 11 years and Nannia, the stoneworker, ruled 7 years. All told, seven kings ruled 491 years before Kish was defeated and its kingship carried off to Uruk.

Kingship in Uruk (Second Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Uruk, Lugalzaggesi ruled for 25 years before Uruk

was defeated and its kingship carried off to Agade.

Kingship in Agade

After kingship was brought to Agade, Sargon, whose father (?) was a gardener, the cupbearer of Ur-Zababa, founded Agade and ruled for 56 years as its king; Rimush, the son of Sargon, ruled 9 years; Manishtushu, a son of Sargon and the older brother of Rimush, ruled 15 years; Naram-Sin, son of Manishtushu, ruled 56 years and Sharkalisharri, son of Naram-Sin ruled 25 years.

Then, who was king? Who was not king? Igigi, Nanum, Imi and Elulu, the four of them were kings but ruled for a total of only 3 years. Dudu took control and ruled for 21 years and Shudurul, son of Dudu, ruled 15 years. All told, eleven kings ruled a total of 197 years before Agade was defeated and its kingship carried off to Uruk.

Kingship In Uruk (Third Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Uruk, Urnigin ruled 7 years; Urgigir, son of Urnigin, ruled 6 years; Kudua ruled 6 years; Puzur-ili ruled 5 years and Ur-Utu ruled 6 years. All told, five kings ruled a total of 30 years before Uruk was smitten by the Gutium Hordes and its kingship carried off by them.

The Gutium Hordes

After the Gutium Hordes seized kingship, everyone was his own king for 3 years; then Imta ruled 3 years; Inkishush ruled 6 years; Sarlagab ruled 6 years; Shulme ruled 6 years;

Elulumesh ruled 6 years; Inimbakesh ruled 5 years; Igeshaush ruled 6 years; Iarlagab ruled 15 years; Ibate ruled 3 years; Iarla ruled 3 years; Kurum ruled 1 year; Apilkin ruled 3 years; Laerabum ruled 2 years; Irarum ruled 2 years;

Ibratum ruled 1 year; Hablum ruled 2 years; Puzur-Sin, the son of Hablum, ruled 7 years; Iarlaganda ruled 7 years; ruled 7 years and Tiriga (?) ruled 40 days. All told, twenty-one kings ruled 91 years and 40 days before the Gutium Hordes were defeated and kingship carried back to Uruk.

Kingship in Uruk (Fourth Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Uruk, Utuhegal ruled 7 years, 6 months and 15 days before Uruk was defeated and its kingship carried off to Ur.

Kingship in Ur (Third Dynasty)

After kingship was brought back to Ur, Ur-Nammu ruled 18 years; Shulgi, son of Ur-Nammu, ruled 48 years; Amar-Sin, son of Shulgi, ruled 9 years; Shu-Sin, son of Amar-Sin (an error for 'son of Shulgi'), ruled 9 years and Ibbi-Sin, son of Shu-Sin, ruled 24 years. All told, five kings ruled for a total of 108 years before Ur was defeated and its kingship carried off to Isin.

Kingship in Isin

After kingship was brought to Isin, Ishbi-Erra ruled 33 years; Shuilishu, son of Ishbi-Erra, ruled 10 years; Idin-Dagan, son of Shuilishu, ruled 21 years; Ishme-Dagan, son of Idin-Dagan, ruled 20 years; Lipit-Ishtar, son of Ishme-Dagan, ruled 11 years;

Ur-Ninurta ruled 28 years; Bur-Sin, son of Ur-Ninurta, ruled 21 years; Lipit-Enlil, son of Bur-Sin, ruled 5 years; Erraimiti ruled 8 years; Enlil-bani ruled 24 years; Zambia ruled 3 years; Iterpisha ruled 4 years; Urdukuga ruled 4 years and Sinmagir ruled 11 years—all told, fourteen kings who ruled a total of 203 years.

The Sumerian King List Ends.

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About this capture

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

The Historical Sumerian King List

	LAGASH	UR	URUK	KISH
2700 BC				
*Enmebaragisi				
(c. 2700 BC)				
*Agga			*Gilgamesh	
(son)				
			*Ur-lugal I (son: 30 yrs)	
			*Utulkamma (son: 15 yrs)	
			*Labashum (9 yrs)	
		*Meskalamdug	*Ennundaraanna (8 yrs)	
2600 BC		*Akalamdug	*MES-HE (36 yrs?)	
	*Enkhegal (c. 2570 BC)	*Mesannipada (c. 2560 BC)	*Melamanna (6 yrs)	
	*Lugalshagengur	*A'annipada (son)	*Lugal-ki-tun (?) (36 yrs)	
		'Meskiagnunna (brother)		*Uhub (c.
2550 BC 2570 BC)				
	*Ur-Nanshe	*Ananne	*Dadasig	*Mesilim (c.
	*Akurgal			
2550 BC)	(son)			
*Mamagalla				
2450 BC		*Meskiag-Nanna (son: 36 yrs)		
	*Eannatum	*Elulu	*Enduanna	
*Galbum	(son)	(25 yrs)	*Ur-Lugal II *Argaandea (7 yrs) *Enshakushanna	(son)
*TUG-e				
	*Enannatum I	*Balulu		
*Mennunna				

	(brother)	(son)		
	*Entemena	*2nd Dynasty	*Lugalkinshedudu	*En-bi-
Ishtar	(son)	(4 kings)		(c.
2430 BC)				
2400 BC	*Enannatum II	(names lost)	*Lugalkisalsi	*Lugalmu
	(son)		(son)	
	*Enetarzi		*Lugal-TAR	*Ku-
Baba				
	*Lugalanda (7 yrs)		*Lugaltarsi	*Puzur-
Sin				
	(2353-2347 BC)			
(son: 25 yrs)				
2350 BC	*UruKAgina (8 yrs)			*Ur-
Zabala				
	(2347-2340 BC)			
*Simudar				
	*Lugalzagesi		*Lugalzagesi	(30
yrs?)				
	(2340-2316 BC)		(2340-2316 BC)	*Usi-
watar (7 yrs?)				

Akkadian Empire of Sargon the Great of Agade (Ruled 2334 to 2279 BC)

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About this capture

James W. Bell's
 Ancient Sumeria
 "In the Days when Gods Walked"

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Lands and City-States
in Sumerian Times

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

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Sumer

The western land was located along a 132-mile stretch of the Euphrates River south of Nippur (approximately the latitude of the present-day city of An Najaf) to the junction with the Iturungal Canal (near the present-day city of An Nasiriyah). It included the following cities (from north to south):

Nippur (left bank, the Holy City of Sumer)

Kisurra (right bank, at the Isinnitum Canal junction))

Shuruppak (right bank, where Atrahasis lived when the Flood was unleashed)

Uruk (left bank, capital city, built on a peninsula at the river's junction with the Iturungal Canal)

To the east, Sumer also included the land along the 124-mile Iturungal Canal. It included the following cities (from north to south):

Adab (left bank)
Dabrum (left bank)
Kl.AN (right bank, site of ancient walled ruins)
Zabalam (left bank, at Ninagina Canal junction)
Umma (left bank, at junction with the Gibil Canal)
Nagsu (left bank)
Bad-tibira (left bank, city of smelteries)
Larsa (left bank)

Also the land along the 62-mile long Gibil Canal. Includes the cities of (from west to east):

Umma (right bank, at Iturungal Canal junction)
Apisala (right bank, at Ninagina Canal junction)
Kesh (an inland city, north from right bank)

Also two distant northern cities:

Sippar (on the left bank of the upper Euphrates)
Eshnunna (on the left bank of the Diyala River near its junction with the Tigris)

Also one distant western city:

Isin (on the Isinnitum Canal, off the right bank of the Euphrates River just above Nippur, to rejoin the Euphrates at Kisurra)

Also one southern city:

Eridu (the oldest city in Sumer, on the Susuka Canal off the right bank of the Euphrates River and on the coast of the Lower Sea (Persian or Arabian Gulf))

Also one city in the mountainlands (HUR.SAG in Sumerian):

Der (a citadel in a mountain pass)

Eden (ED.IN in Sumerian: plain, grazing land) The Eden was the mostly empty land between the Euphrates River and the Iturungal Canal. Largely desert, it contained the Arali Desert in the southern quarter, where Dumuzi was caught. Contains the following cities (from north to south):

KI.AN ('Heaven on Earth' in Sumerian) Walled ruins on the right bank of the Iturungal Canal.

Uruk (Sumer's capital city, located on a peninsula in the southwest corner of Eden at the junction of the Iturungal Canal with the Euphrates River).

Chaldea

The land along the delta reaches of the Euphrates River. Includes the following cities (from north to south):

Enegi (on the left bank at junction with the Iturungal Canal, across the canal from Uruk.)

Kutallu (inland on the left bank of the Nanagugal Canal)

Larak (left bank of the Euphrates, location uncertain, this city was destroyed in the Flood)

Ur (capital city, on the left bank of the Euphrates)

Kuara (sometimes known as Kisiga, on the left bank and on the coast of the Lower Sea <Persian or Arabian Gulf>)

Sealands

The land along the Ninagina Canal south of Apisala Canal (from north to south):

Girsu (left bank)

Lagash (left bank, the capital of the Sealands)

Nina (sometimes called Sirara, on the right bank and on the coast of the Lower Sea, present-day Persian or Arabian Gulf)

Akkad

The land along the branches of the Upper Euphrates River north of Nippur. Includes the following cities:

Babil (capital city, sometimes known as Babylon, on the left bank of the western branch)

Dilbat (on the right bank of the western branch)

Marad (on the right bank of the western branch)

Kish (on the right bank of the middle branch)

Kutha (on the right bank of the eastern branch)

Tidnum

The desert to the southwest of Sumer and Akkad (northeastern modern-day Saudi Arabia). Home of the Amurru (the Biblical Amorites). They were nomads and had no permanent cities.

Elam

The land to the northeast of the Sealand. Contains the flatland province of Susiana, the mountainous province of Anshan and the coastal province of Liyan. Includes the following cities:

Susa (capital of both Susiana and Elam, near present-day Ahvas in southwestern Iran))
Anshan (capital of Anshan province, land to the southeast of Susiana, present-day Fars, ancestral home of the Persians and site of Persepolis).
Liyan (coastal province near present-day port of Bushire in southwestern Iran)

Warashi

Mountainland kingdom to the north of Elam

Warum

Also known as Gutium. Mountainland kingdom northeast of Akkad, home of the Gutis. Sometimes reputed to include the Sumerian city of Eshnunna.

Dilmun

The modern day isle of Bahrain. In Sumerian mythology, it was a paradise where no one became sick or grew old.

Agarum (a province of Dilmun, today's Failaka Island off the coast of Kuwait))

Magan

Modern day Oman. Magan was a source of copper and diorite (black stone used by Sumerian sculptors). Ninsikilla was its patron god.

Meluhha

The ruins of an ancient civilization along the Indus River valley in modern day Pakistan.

Meluhha was a source of gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian and ivory.

Ægypt

Modern day Egypt.

Go Back to the Fact Menu

Before Sargon the Great (2334-2279 BCE) established the Akkadian Empire, the lands of Sumeria were a collection of clusters of cities and villages, with the largest city in each cluster usually being the capital.

Boundaries were not contiguous, especially the boundaries of Sumer, with its large population of trading peoples who, like the Phoenicians and the Greeks, often established distant trading colonies. In addition, sometimes even the gods founded cities, such as Enlil who founded the holy city of Nippur or Anu, who founded Der, a citadel in a mountainland pass to help protect the cities of Sumer from mountain bandits of the Hursag.

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Sumerian Waterways

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

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The Euphrates River

Sumeria's primary waterway

The Euphrates River flowed southeast from the Tarsus Mountains past the cities of Is and Sippar, then branched into three rivers to reunite just above Nippur from whence it flowed on past Kisurra, Shuruppak, Uruk and Enegi, before branching again at the delta to the Lower Sea (Persian/Arabian Gulf). Larak, Ur and Kuara (sometimes known as Kisiga) were located on the eastern branch.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Nippur, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Kisurra, municipal quay	33 miles	33 miles
Shuruppak, municipal quay	10 miles	43 miles
Uruk, Kullab Quay	28 miles	71 miles

Enegi, South Quay	2 miles	73 miles
Ur, municipal quay	40 miles	113 miles
Kuara, municipal quay	19 miles	132 miles

The Gibil Canal
flowed southwest from the Tigris River

The Gibil Canal flowed southwest from the Tigris River to a point south of the frontier city of Kesh, past a branch which went north to that city. The Gibil continued on to Apisala where it intersected with the Ninagina Canal which flowed southeast from Zabalam. From Apisala, the Gibil went on to Umma, where it joined the Iturungal Canal.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Entrance from the Tigris	0 miles	0 miles
Entrance - canal to Kesh	38 miles	38 miles
Apisala, municipal quay	14 miles	52 miles
Umma, municipal quay	10 miles	62 miles

The Isinnitum Canal

The Issinnitum Canal left the right bank of the Euphrates above Nippur to run by the city of Isin, and thence to rejoin the Euphrates at Kisurra.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Nippur, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Isin, municipal quay	21 miles	21 miles
Rejoins the Euphrates	24 miles	45 miles

The Iturungal Canal
Sumeria's secondary waterway

The Iturungal Canal left the Euphrates below Nippur to go southeast past the craft cities of Adab, Dabrum, Zabalam, Umma, Nagsu, Bad-tibira and Larsa before it flowed between the twin cities of Uruk and Enegi to rejoin the Euphrates.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
---------------	----------	------------------------

Nippur, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Adab, municipal quay	30 miles	30 miles
Dabrum, municipal quay	5 miles	35 miles
KI.AN, landing	7 miles	42 miles
Zabalam, municipal quay	4 miles	46 miles
Umma, municipal quay	13 miles	59 miles
Nagsu, municipal quay	19 miles	78 miles
Bad-tibira, municipal quay	12 miles	90 miles
Larsa, municipal quay	16 miles	106 miles
Enegi, North Quay	14 miles	120 miles
Uruk, Eanna Quay	1 mile	121 miles
Uruk, Kullab Quay	3 miles	124 miles

The Lower Sea
(also called 'The Bitter Sea'
and 'Sea of the Rising Sun')

The Lower Sea is today known in Iran as 'The Persian Gulf' and in Arab countries as 'The Arabian Gulf.' In the 27th century BCE, the coastline of the Lower Sea was approx. 19 miles south of Ur.

The Nanagugal Canal
from the Iturungal to the Lower Sea

The Nanagugal Canal, which departed from the left bank of the Iturungal Canal 7 miles downwater from Bad-tibira, marked the eastern boundary of Ur and the western boundary of Lagash.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Iturungal Canal, left bank	0 miles	0 miles
Kutallu, plantation quay	7 miles	7 miles
Lower Sea, coast	27 miles	34 miles

The Ninagina Canal
Sumeria's tertiary waterway
and the Sealand's primary waterway

The Ninagina Canal left the Iturungal at Zabalam and intersected with the Gibil Canal at Apisala to flow southeast through the Sealand, passing by the cities of Girsu, Lagash and Nina (sometimes called Sirara) on the coast of the Lower Sea. As the Ninagina's route was through marshlands, it was the canal most often used for smuggling.

City and Quay	Distance	Cumulative Distance
Zabalam, municipal quay	0 miles	0 miles
Apisala, municipal quay	16 miles	16 miles
Girsu, municipal quay	32 miles	48 miles
Lagash, municipal quay	5 miles	53 miles
Nina, municipal quay	14 miles	67 miles

The Susuka Canal The way to the city of Eridu

The Susuka Canal was a wide, eleven-mile long canal flowing southeast from the city of Ur to the city of Eridu on a bay on the coast of the Lower Sea (Persian/Arabian Gulf).

The Tigris River A natural barrier to mountain peoples

The Tigris River flowed southeast from the Tarsus Mountains, parallel to the Euphrates. The only Sumerian city serviced by the Tigris was Eshnunna which was actually on the Diyala River, but near its junction with the Tigris. The most important feature of the Tigris was that it served as a natural barrier to less civilized tribes and bandits living in the Hursag, the Zagros mountainlands of western Iran.

[Go Back to the Fact Menu](#)

Although Sumeria was mostly desert, its waterways (like Egypt's) served as the highways of commerce. In the 27th century BCE, camels had yet to be introduced and overland transport was principally by donkeys ('asses' in the Bible). Ships and boats, moved vast tonnages of cargo along the Euphrates River and major canals and thence into the Lower Sea (the Persian or Arabian Gulf) for shipment to foreign lands.

As Sumer had virtually no natural resources other than water, mud, reeds and a few bitumen seeps, Sumerians were forced to trade with foreign lands to get the copper, timber and other raw materials needed to build their civilization. Large port cities like Uruk and Ur near the mouth of the Euphrates made Sumer one of the dominant powers in the ancient world.

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Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Sumerian Cities

By James W. Bell © 2001 - 2003

Although the cities of Sumeria were independent city states, most with lugals (kings), they also tended to be interdependent for three reasons:

- (1) To maintain the rivers and canals that criss-crossed the Land, connecting cities and serving as the roadways of Sumer;
- (2) To maximize benefits from extensive trading which resulted in specialization and
- (3) To better serve the pantheon of gods who regularly met as the Assembly of the Gods at the Ekur temple in the holy city of Nippur on the Upper Euphrates.

[.....] Indicate assumptions on which my stories are based.

Adab

(Not mentioned in the Bible)

Modern day Tell Bismaya

Located on the upper Iturungal Canal.

Click here to read the book by Edgar James Banks:

Bismya: The Lost City of Adab.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population approx. 13,000, urban area approx. 125 acres.]

[Adab, one of Sumer's older cities, was the northernmost city on the Iturungal Canal, sited on the east bank of the canal 15 miles below where it branched off from the Euphrates.]

[Adab was the cosmopolitan city of Northern Sumer, a city of mixed races, including Akkadian, Amurri and Sumerian populations. As Uruk was Sumer's southern trading city, Adab was the northern trading center, selling leather goods from Lagash, pottery from Zabalam, jewelry from Umma, metals from Bad-tibira, textiles from Larsa and dates from as far away as Ur. Originally, it existed to furnish supplies and sanctified foodstuffs to the temples in the holy city of Nippur. Because of its location on the heavily-traveled Iturungal, it also specialized in the sale of supplies and votive items to pilgrims on their way to the holy city.]

[The city's patron deity was ostensibly the Earth goddess, Ninhursag, but its destiny was decreed by one of her daughters, Lisin, a little known goddess interested in handicraft production and trade.]

Anshan
(Not mentioned in the Bible.)
Today's Tell Tepe Maylan.
Located in the mountains, southeast of Susa.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 10,000; urban area. approx. 125 acres.]

Like Susa, Anshan was one of the major cities of the city-state of Elam. In the third millennium, Anshan was surrounded by a wall protecting 500 acres, only a quarter of which was occupied. The city had workshops for processing lapis lazuli and other materials imported from a distant area that today is known as Afghanistan.

The city's patron deity is not known.

Apisala
(Not mentioned in the Bible.)
Located north of the Gibil Canal east of Zabalam.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 1,000; urban area, less than 50 acres.]

*[Apisala was a small outpost on the edge of the frontier, on the Gibil Canal at its intersection with the Ninagina. The town served mainly as a watcher (security) station to protect settlers along the eastern stretch of the Gibil Canal from mountain bandits

raiding from the Hursag and to stop smuggling on the Ninagina Canal.]*

The city's patron deity is not known.

Aratta

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Located in the Zagros Mountains, possibly at the archaeological site of Godin, six miles east of Kangavar in southern Kurdistan in Iran.

[27th Century BCE estimates: permanent population, 1,000; partially abandoned urban area, approx. 100 acres.]

[According to legend, when the gods first came down to the Earth, they built the city of Aratta on the highest mountaintops to be nearer to Heaven. The mountain range, today's Zagros Mountains, was called the Land of the Gods.]

[The gods lived in the city of Aratta with their newly-created servants, human mortals, nearby. Later, after the gods abandoned the city and moved down to the Plain of Sumer, humans took over the city.]

[When the other gods left, a young goddess named Innin, who had been born on the Earth and had therefore not been assigned a mission, took it on herself to take charge of Aratta. She remained its tutelary goddess until she was renamed by Anu as Inanna, Queen of Heaven. As Inanna, she followed the other gods down to the Plain of Sumer, where she took over the city of Zabalam on the Iturungal Canal.]

The Lord of Aratta pleaded for Inanna to return, but to no avail. *[The mountainlands grew lawless and became the home of bandits. They were thereafter called the Hursag and regarded as both foreign and hostile.]*

Babil

(Called Babylon by the Greeks)

(The Biblical Babylon and the Babel of Genesis.)

Located on the western branch
of the Upper Euphrates.

[Click here to see archaeological site and art](#)

[Click here for two pages of images of Babylon](#)

[27th Century BCE estimates: population: less than 6,000, urban area less than 50 acres.]

'Babylon' was the Greek name for this city. Although until the time of Hammurabi (1792-1749 BCE) this was hardly more than a village, Biblical references make it

important.

[It was in the city of Babil where the gods saw the ziggurat built, designed to reach Heaven. They chose to tear it down and confound the language of men so they no longer understood one another. They drove the inhabitants out of the city into the desert that lies to the south and west. The people endured, but lost the veneer of civilization, becoming the Amurru (the Biblical Amorites).]

[It was Enki who, long afterwards, gave the deserted city of Babil to his son, Marduk. "Go, my son," he told young Marduk. "Go to Babil and get the mortals to help rebuild it. Make Babil once again the pre-eminent city on the Earth."]

The patron deity of Babil was Marduk, Enki's son.

Bad-tibira

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern Tell al-Medain or Medina.

Located on the Iturungal Canal, below Umma.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population: approx. 19,000; urban area approx, 175 acres.]

One of the five antediluvian cities of Sumeria, located on the southern part of the Iturungal where the canal turns to the west.

[Bad-tibira was a city of reed-burning furnaces and smelteries situated on the edge of the marshlands, using the swamp as a source of water and reeds. Ores were brought from overseas via the Euphrates and Iturungal to the furnaces of Bad-tibira. Metals, principally copper, but also gold and silver, were shipped from there to artisan shops in the urban centers of Uruk, Ur, Umma and Adab.]

The patron deity of Bad-tibira was Lulal, son of Inanna. The city was once the province of the god Dumuzi, Inanna's estranged husband.

Dabrum

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Jidr.

Located on the Upper Iturungal above Zabalam.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 3,000; urban area, less than 50 acres.]

Dabrum was a minor city on the left bank of the Iturungal that served as a way station

between Adab and Zabalam. *[It also served as a collection point for wool and agricultural produce.]*

The patron deity of Dabrum is not known.

Der

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

(Modern day Tell Aqar [Badrah] in eastern Iraq.)

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 3,000; urban area less than 50 acres.]

[According to legend, Der was the citadel built by Anu in the middle pass of the Hursag after most gods abandoned the Land of the Gods. Its purpose was to protect Sumeria by serving as a bulwark against roving bands of mountain bandits. The cities of Eshnunna and Susa protected the northern and southern passes respectively.]

[Der is where Innin first met Anu and where her name was changed to Inanna, Queen of Heaven. When Inanna later invited Anu to join her in the Eanna temple at Uruk, Anu gave dominion over Der to Ishtaran, a god interested in adjudicating border disputes.]

The patron deity of Der was Ishtaran, who assumed the duty of protecting the border after Anu left.

Dilbat

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Deylum.

Located on the western branch
of the Upper Euphrates.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area less than 50 acres.]

Dilbat was located on the right bank of the Western Euphrates downriver from Babil.

[The city was an agricultural center, producing reed products and grain grown in nearby fields locally using Amurru workers as an inexpensive source of labor. The nomad labor was cheaper than keeping slaves. The farms grew big in size, becoming plantations and producing families with immense landholdings. Dilbat was a walled city of trees, parks and beautiful buildings, a forerunner of what Babil (Babylon) would later become with its hanging gardens.]

The patron deity of Dilbat was the goddess Urash.

Enegi

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Umm al-Wawiya.

Located just below the confluence of the Iturungal and Euphrates, across the canal from Uruk.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area, less than 50 acres.]

Enegi, the northernmost Kaldee city, was located at the junction of the Iturungal Canal with the Euphrates River. It was a heavily walled city across the canal from Uruk, the great trading center of Sumer.

[Enegi was unique in fronting on the two great waterways of Sumer and was a city of shipyards and supplies for the Sumerian merchant marine.]

The patron deity of Enegi was Ninazu.

Eridu

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Abu Shahrein - [click here for scenes](#).

Located on the northern coast of the Lower Sea.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 1,000; built up urban area, approx. 100 acres.]

One of the five antediluvian cities of Sumeria, Eridu is the oldest of all Sumerian cities.

[For my stories, Eridu is situated on a lagoon called the Blue Lagoon on the coast of the Lower Sea (today's Persian or Arabian Gulf).]

Legend has it that the god Enki came here from Dilmun (today's Bahrain) and founded the city directly over the Abzu. According to the Sumerian King List, Eridu was the first capital of Sumer.

The patron deity of Eridu was Enki (Ea in Akkadian).

Eshnunna

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Asmar

[Click here for images of figurines found at the site.](#)

Located on the Lower Diyala River.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 12,000; urban area, approx. 100 acres.]

Eshnunna was located on the Diyala River near its juncture with the Tigris.

[Like Der and Susa, the other frontier cities situated along the foothills of the Hursag, the walled city of Eshnunna was built on a platform mount overlooking the Diyala valley. Though a part of the Sumerian hegemony, Eshnunna was the principal city of an area sometimes called Warum and served as its capital.]

The patron deity of Eshnunna was Ninazu.

Girsu

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tello - archaeological site scenes.

[Located on the Upper Ninagina Canal.]

*[27th Century BCE estimates: population: approx. 8,000; urban area, less than 100 acres.]

[Girsu was the northernmost Sumerian city on the Ninagina Canal, sited on its left bank. It was located where the Sumerian steppe met the marshlands. Girsu was subservient to Lagash, and Bau, wife of Girsu's god, Ningirsu, had a temple at Lagash. The city of Girsu was spectacular, with whitewashed buildings and tall date palms lining the canal bank. Much of the city's prosperity had to do with processing leather from Lagash and from smuggling profits earned by traffic on the Ninagina.]

The patron deity of Girsu was Ningirsu.

Isin

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Ishan al-Bahriyat

Located on the Isinnitum Canal.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 4,000; urban area, approx. 50 acres.]

[Isin was a city in northwestern Sumer, to the west of the Euphrates, on the Isinnitum Canal. It was an entry point for Amorites leaving the desert and looking for a new life. Gula, the patron goddess of the city did what she could to help the sick and injured. The city consisted of single-storied utilitarian buildings without much design.]

The patron deity of Isin was the goddess Gula.

Kesh

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Perhaps modern day Tell Jidr.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population approx. 11,000, urban area: approx. 100 acres.]

The location of Kesh is uncertain, but it is likely somewhere southeast of Adab.

[For my stories, I have placed it east of the Euphrates and north of the Gibil Canal, in an area between Sumer and the bandit-ridden mountainlands of the Hursag, in the land I've called the frontier. I have made it a community of settlers, principally nomadic Amurru from Tidnum who shepherded sheep in the foothills.]

The patron deity of Kesh was the goddess Ninhursag.

KI.AN

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Located near Zabalam, possibly Tell Shmid.

[27th Century BCE estimates: abandoned; extent of ruins, approx. 125 acres.]

[KI.AN (Sumerian KI = Earth, AN = Heaven), Heaven on Earth, was an ancient walled cultic center on the right bank of the Iturungal Canal above Zabalam. By the time of my stories, it had long been abandoned and was in ruins.]

[The tutelary god of KI.AN is unknown.]

Kish

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Al Ukhaimir.

[Click here for scenes of the archaeological site.](#)

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 32,000; urban area, 250 acres.]

According to the Sumerian King List, Kish was the first postdiluvian capital of Sumer.

*[This Akkadian city was where the god, Enlil, handed down kingship after the Flood. For centuries afterwards, the king of a ruling city, no matter which city, would add to his

title, " ... and king of Kish." This ancient city, located on the middle branch of the Upper Euphrates was for many years the city of crafts in the north. By the time my stories take place, kingship had moved south to the Sumerian city of Uruk.]*

The patron deity of Kish was Zababa.

Kisiga (see Kuara)

Kisurra

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Abu-Hatab.

Located on the Middle Euphrates above Shuruppak.

*[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area, less than 50 acres.]

[A port on the right bank of the Euphrates River at its juncture with the southern end of the Isinnitum Canal. A city able to communicate by fire signals with Zabalam on the other side of Eden.]

The patron god of Kisurra was Ninurta.

Kuara (also known as Kisiga)

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Probably modern day Tell al-Lahm.

Located on the northern coast of the Lower Sea.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area, less than 50 acres.]

[Kuara was the principal seaport on the Lower Sea (Persian or Arabian Gulf) at the mouth of the Euphrates River. The city was also the birthplace of Marduk, Enki's son, who was first known as Asarluhi. The city, called Kisiga by the Kaldees, was a port city dependent upon overseas trade, especially with Dilmun.]

The patron deity of Kuara was Meslamtea.

Kutallu (also known as Kutalla)

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Sift

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 4,000; urban area, less than 35 acres.]

"[A city on the right bank of the Susuka Canal in the heart of Chaldea. It was surrounded by date plantations and was a leading producer of dried dates, date wine and date honey. It also had fruit trees which grew under the canopy of the palms. Craft shops there produced products made of palm tree wood, fiber and fronds. Most of Kutallu's production was sent downwater by the Susuka Canal to Ur for sale or transshipment.]*"

The patron deity of Kutallu is unknown.

Kutha (also known as Kutu)
(Biblical connection: See Cuthah in II Kings 17:24
and Cuth in II Kings 17:30.)
Near modern day Tell Habil Ibraham.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area, less than 100 acres.]

[Kutha was a very ancient city, a smuggler's marketplace located on the eastern branch of the Upper Euphrates. It was often under siege by the Amurru or Guti, or sometimes both. It had a large underground trade in obsidian, lapis lazuli, carnelian and other precious stones and metals that came from the northeast (modern day Iran and Afghanistan). These gems were shipped downstream to jewelry craftsmen in Umma, Uruk and other cities.]

[Kutha had a sleazy appearance. It was a city of sin and excitement, where money changed hands fast. The farmlands around the city, where dry farming is possible, were partially abandoned by their owners who had 'struck it rich' in town.]

The patron deity of Kutha was Nergal, King of the Underworld.

Lagash
(Not mentioned in the Bible.)
Modern day Tell Al-Hiba
[Click here for scenes from the archaeological site.](#)
Located on the east bank of the Ninagina Canal.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 25,000; urban area, approx. 250 acres.]

*[Lagash was a port on the left hand side of the Ninagina Canal. It was the capital of

the state known as Lagash (or Sealand). Situated near the mountainlands of the Hursag, it was the primary slave-trading center for Sumeria. It also served as a center for processing and tanning leather, especially from water buffalo. Being on the Ninagina Canal and adjacent to the marshlands, it was a port of entry for smugglers. However, due to extensive tanning operations, the atmosphere at Lagash had a distinctively unpleasant odor.]*

The patron deity of Lagash was the goddess Bau.

Larak

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

The site of this antediluvian city is unknown.

Larak was one of the antediluvian cities mentioned in the Sumerian King List.

[For my stories, I have assigned it a location on the right bank of the Euphrates above Ur. The city was wiped out when the Flood occurred and never rebuilt, serving as a living memorial to the wrath of Enlil. During the Flood, its god, Pabilsag, left the Great Above and descended to the Netherworld.]

Larsa

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Senkere.

Located on the Lower Iturungal near Enegi.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population: approx. 25,000; urban area: approx. 250 acres.]

Larsa was located on the left bank of the Iturungal Canal near its junction with the Euphrates at Uruk-Enegi. It was situated at both the demographic and geographic center of Sumer.

[For my stories, Larsa is a city of warehouses and other buildings crowding the quay on the canal. It specialized in product modification, especially textile dyeing for trade with the Amurru and overseas. The city thrived as a trading center because of 'fair treatment' and 'playing by the rules,' both enforced by Shamash.]

The patron deity of Larsa was the sun god, Shamash.

Marad

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Wannat es-Sadum.

Located on the right bank of the western branch
of the Upper Euphrates.

*[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area, less than 50
acres.]*

*[For my stories, Marad was the desert city of Sumeria, located on the right bank of the
western branch of the Upper Euphrates. There was little trade except to serve as a
collection point for what the Amurru brought in from the desert. Marad was a typical
desert city composed of mud brick buildings surrounded by a low city wall.]*

The patron deity of Marad was Ninurta, the Storm God..

Nagsu
(Not mentioned in the Bible.)
Location is unknown.

*[Assumed 27th Century BCE figures: population, less than 3,000; urban area, less than
50 acres.]*

*[For my stories, Nagsu was on the left bank of the Iturungal Canal at a point one day's
journey down from Umma, where a small canal, the Nantuma, branched off southward
leading into the marshlands and connecting, ultimately, with the Ninagina Canal. The
Nantuma was one of the favorite routes for smugglers to avoid port inspections and
resulting tolls. From there, smuggled goods were shipped overseas or on to legitimate
markets in Sumer.]*

The patron deity of Nagsu is unknown.

Nina (also known as Sirara)
(Not mentioned in the Bible.)
Modern Tell Zurghul in southern Iraq.
Located on the Lower Sea coast
at the mouth of the Ninagina Canal.

*[27th Century BCE estimates: population, less than 5,000; urban area, less than 50
acres.]*

*[For my stories, Nina is a port city on the right hand bank of the Ninagina Canal where
it empties into the Lower Sea. Enki raised a hill from the marshlands on which to build
the city for his daughter, Nanshe.]*

The patron deity of Nina was the goddess Nanshe.

Nippur

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Niffer (Nuffar).

[Click here for scenes from the archaeological site.](#)

[Click here for the Holy City of Nippur excavations.](#)

Located on the left bank of the mid Euphrates.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 18,000; urban area, approx. 200 acres.]

Nippur was located on the left bank of the Euphrates River and served as the dividing line between Sumer and Akkad, except for the Sumerian cities of Sippar and Eshnunna which were both north of Nippur. Nippur was a holy city, where Enlil, king of the gods, had his temple, called the Ekur. The Assembly of the Gods met at the Ekur. Nippur, much like today's Mecca, stood aloof from politics, but kings from cities throughout Sumeria went to Nippur to gain recognition for their kingship.

The patron deity of Nippur was Enlil, king of the gods.

Shuruppak

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Fara

Located on the Euphrates north of Uruk.

[27th Century estimates: population, approx. 21,000; urban area, approx. 250 acres.]

Shuruppak was one of the five antediluvian cities according to the Sumerian King List. It is located on the right hand bank of the Euphrates River some thirty miles north of Uruk. The Flood came while Ubartutu was lugal (king) of Shuruppak, and Utnapishtim / Ziusura / Atra-hasis (three names for the Sumerian Noah who came from Shuruppak) built an ark and rode to safety with his family.

[In my stories, Shuruppak was the center of an agriculture district along the Euphrates. It also served as a collection center for products brought in from the desert by the Amurru.]

Shuruppak's patron deity was the goddess Sud.

Sippar

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Abu Habbah.

[Click here for scenes from the archaeological site.](#)

More archaeological site scenes are [here](#).

Located on the Upper Euphrates near present-day Baghdad.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 16,000; urban area, approx. 200 acres.]

Sippar is the northernmost city of Sumer and is where the Euphrates River bifurcated. In ancient days, the Euphrates was often called 'The River of Sippar.' It was one of the five antediluvian cities listed in the Sumerian King List.

[In my stories, Sippar is a distant trading outpost, shipping locally grown wool and agricultural products down the Euphrates. It also trans-shipped bitumen from Is (also called Tuttul, the modern city of Hit) and was the jumping off point for those venturing up the Euphrates valley.]

Sippar's patron deity was the Sumerian sun god, Shamash.

Sirara (see Nina)

Susa

(The Biblical 'Shushan' - the site of Esther and the story of Daniel and the lions. See the books of Nehemiah, Esther and Daniel.)

Modern day city of Shush in Iran

Located on a plain east of Sumer.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 22,000; urban area, approx. 300 acres.]

Susa, located on the Ulai Canal, was the capital of both the province of Susiana and the country of Elam.

[In my stories, Susa was one of the earliest cities, located near the Land of the Gods which was in the mountains. An early civilization flourished there producing, among other things, beautiful pottery for the gods.]

The patron deity of Susa was the Elamite god Inshushinak.

Umma

(Not mentioned in the Bible.)

Modern day Tell Jokha.

[Click here for scenes from the archaeological site.](#)

Located on the middle Iturungal Canal.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx.31,000; urban area, approx. 500 acres.]

Umma was a sizable city on the left bank of the Iturungal Canal at its junction with the Gibil Canal.

[In my stories, Umma was a city of jewelers and other artisans working with precious metals from Bad-tibira and precious stones imported from overseas and from the east. The city-state had numerous conflicts with Lagash over a large tract of fertile agricultural land to the south between the two cities, called the Gu-edin.]

Umma's patron deity was Shara, one of Inanna's sons.

Ur

(This city is the Biblical 'Ur of Chaldea' that Abraham came from. See: Genesis 11:28,31; 15,7; I Chronicles 11,35; and Nehemiah 9,7.)

Modern day Tell al-Muqayyar.

[Click here for a brief history of Ur.](#)

[Click here for scenes from the archaeological site.](#)

Located on the left bank of the Lower Euphrates.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 34,000; urban area, approx 150 acres.]

The city of Ur, on the left bank of the Lower Euphrates, was the largest city in Chaldea and served as its capital.

[In my stories, Ur unsuccessfully competed with Uruk for trade but served as the primary center for date and dye exports.]

Ur's patron deity was the moon god, Sin.

Uruk

(This is the Biblical 'Erech' : Genesis 10,10.)

Modern day Tell Warka

[Click here for scenes from the archaeological site.](#) Located at the juncton of the Iturungal Canal with the Euphrates River.

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 80,000; urban area, approx. 1,000 acres.]

Uruk, at the confluence of the Iturungal Canal with the Euphrates River was the largest city in the world of ancient Sumeria. It was the trading center of Sumer and was often called "the Marketplace of the Land."

Because of its extensive trading activity, it had a diverse population and was often referred to as 'The Rainbow City.' Actually, Uruk was a combination of two cities; Kullab, the secular half, which fronted on the Euphrates River and Eanna, the older divine half which fronted on the Iturungal Canal.

[For the purpose of my stories, Uruk is also the center of the Karum, a guild of independent tradesmen called the traders. Besides being the marketplace of Sumeria, it was also its financial center.]

The patron deity of Uruk was the goddess Inanna, who was later known as Ishtar by the Babylonians.

Zabalam
(Not mentioned in the Bible.)
Modern day Tell Ibzeikh.

Located on the Iturungal Canal at its junction with the Ninagina Canal..

[27th Century BCE estimates: population, approx. 9,000; urban area, approx. 100 acres.]

[In my stories, Zabalam, sometimes written Zabala, was on the left bank of the Iturungal Canal, at its junction with the Ninagina, which also gave it access to the Gibil Canal. It was one of the important ports of Sumeria. Locally, it produced ceramics.]

The patron deity of Zabalam was the goddess Inanna.

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James W. Bell's
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"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"

Sumerian Units of Measure

by James W. Bell

English Names	Sumerian Names	Equivalent Measures	Mathematical Relationships
------------------	-------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------

Measures of Length

Finger	Shusi	.67 Inch	
Cubit	Kush	20 Inches	= 30 Fingers
Reed	Gi	10 Feet	= 6 Cubits
Long Reed	Ninda	20 Feet	= 2 Reeds
Line	Esh	200 Feet	= 10 Long Reeds
Stage	Danna	10.8 Kilometers	= 1,800 Long Reeds

Measures of Area

Garden	Sar	376 Sq. Feet	
Field	Iku	0.9 Acre	= 100 Gardens
	Eshe	5 Acres	= 6 Fields
	Bur	15½ Acres	= 3 Eshe
	Buru	156 Acres	= 10 Bur
	Shar	936 Acres	= 6 Buru
	Sharu	9,400 Acres	= 10 Shar
	Shargal	56,400 Acres	= 6 Sharu

English Names	Sumerian Names	Equivalent Measures	Mathematical Relationships
------------------	-------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------

Measures of Capacity (Used In Uruk)

Sila	1 Liter	
Ban	10 Liters	= 10 Sila

Barig	60 Liters	= 6 Ban
Gur	300 Liters	= 5 Barig

Measures of Capacity (Used In Lagash)

Gin	0.025 Liters	
Sila	1.5 Liters	= 60 Gin
Ban	10 Liters	= 6 Sila
Barig	60 Liters	= 6 Ban
Gursag +gal	240 Liters	= 4 Barig

English Names	Sumerian Names	Equivalent Measures	Mathematical Relationships
------------------	-------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------

Measures of Weight

Grain	She		
Shekel	Gin	$\frac{1}{4}$ Ounce	= 180 She
Mina	Mana	1 Pound	= 60 Shekels
Talent	Gu	60 Pounds	= 60 Minas

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Sumerian Monetary Values

Facts about Ancient Sumer

Precious Metals

There was no coinage in Sumer. Trading was done using standard or equivalent units of value. The most popular standardized unit of value was silver. Whenever the unit of value was not named, it was assumed to be silver.

For example, if a quoted price was 10 shekels, it meant 10 shekels weight of silver.

Prices quoted in copper (i.e., 10 shekels of copper) or gold (i.e., 10 shekels of gold) always named the metal.

Precious metal values were set by royal decree but it should be understood that, like produce prices and commodity prices, prices of metals varied widely in Sumer according to the amount imported (virtually all metals were imported into Sumer) and the political condition of the city-state..

Precious Metal Ratios in Ancient Sumeria

Historically, in Ancient Sumeria, precious metal ratios constantly changed (as they do today). but, in the 27th century BCE, the following ratios were approximately:

1 Shekel of Silver = 60 Shekels of Copper
1 Shekel of Gold = 12 Shekels of Silver
1 Shekel of Gold = 720 Shekels of Copper

Measures of Weight

Grain	She		
Shekel	Gin	¼ Ounce	=180 Grains
Mina	Mana	1 Pound	= 60 Shekels
Talent	Gu	60 Pounds	= 60 Minas

Barley Units

Because of the salinity of the ground, barley was the single most popular agricultural crop in Sumer. As a result, it was the second most popular unit of trade. It had an equivalency value and was quoted and traded by capacity, that is, gurs of barley grain.

(1 Gur of barley, about 8½ bushels of barley, was worth 1 shekel of silver or, conversely, 1 bushel of barley was worth about 12 shekels of copper.)

Measures of Capacity

Sila	1 Liter	
Ban	10 Liters	= 10 Sila
Barig	60 Liters	= 6 Ban
Gur	300 Liters	= 5 Barig

Other Popular Equivalent Units of Value

Other popular units of value in Sumer included fish which were plentiful in the rivers and canals. They were traded by capacity. 1 Shekel (of silver) bought 1 gur (32 quarts) of 'mixed fish,' but only ½ gur of 'good fish.'

Days of manual labor were also an equivalent unit of value and traded by number of days.

An ox-herd was paid 6 gur of barley a year, which works out to 5 liters of barley per day.

A Price Comparison

One shekel bought twelve pairs of leather sandals of average quality. Thus the price per pair of leather sandals (1 shekel of silver = 60 shekels of copper) was 5 shekels of copper.

Interest Rates in Ancient Sumer

Annual interest rates were 20% on silver loans and 33% on barley loans.

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The Sumerian Calendar

Facts about Ancient Sumer

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Sumerian Chronology

Sumerians numbered their years by the year of the reign of a king, i.e., 'in the third year of the reign of Lugalzaggesi,' etc. King lists were kept for dating prior reigns.

Years

Years consisted of twelve lunar months of 29 or 30 days. To keep the lunar year (354 days) in step with the solar year, the lugal (king) decreed the addition of an intercalary or extra month to the Sumerian calendar every three years or so.

In Sumerian times, the year began after harvest time, in September/October. Later, Babylonians moved the start of the calendar year to spring.

Seasons

Sumerians had only two seasons. The dry season, the growing season called 'emesh,' summer, began in February/March at the beginning of the year. The wet season, 'enten,' winter, began in September/October when the arrival of the rains.

However, the flooding of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers was a result of snow melting in

the Taurus Mountains (in today's Turkey) and occurred in April and May.

Months

Sumerian months were strictly lunar and each month began at the first sighting of the new moon. Because there was no universal religion, there was no uniformity in the names of months between Sumerian cities. Months were often named for local feasts, events or agricultural activities. Scribes overcame the name problem by numerating the months, such as 'the fourth month,' etc., as is done in the Biblical book of Genesis.

Although Sumerian months were lunar, intercalated months were added when needed to keep the calendar adjusted to the seasons. This resulted in some years having thirteen months instead of the normal twelve.

For those interested in month names used in different Sumerian and Babylonian cities, and the associated rituals, feasts and festivals associated with them, [click here](#).

Weeks and Holy Days

There were no weeks in Ancient Sumeria. Holy days, time off from work, were usually celebrated on the first, seventh and fifteenth of each month. In addition to these holy days, there were also feast days which varied from city to city.

Days

The Sumerian day started at sunset (as in Genesis) and was twelve double hours long, six double hours of daytime and six double hours of nighttime.

Watches

A Sumerian day consisted of six watches, each being two double hours long.

Daytime Watches:

1st Watch	- Morning	8:00 AM - 12:00 AM
2nd Watch	- Midday	12:00 AM - 4:00 PM
3rd Watch	- Afternoon	4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Nighttime Watches:

1st Watch	- Evening	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
-----------	-----------	--------------------

2nd Watch	- Starlight	12:00 PM -	4:00 AM
3rd Watch	- Dawn	4:00 AM -	8:00 AM

Hours

The length of Sumerian a hour actually varied by season (a daytime hour was one-sixth of the available daylight and so would be much longer in the summer than in the winter) but over a year, an hour averaged double the length of our present-day hours (120 minutes).

Because of its sexagesimal-based numbering system, the Sumerian double hour contained 60 minutes and the minute contained 60 seconds, the same as today.

Distance

Distance was measured in terms of how far a man could walk in a double hour and was called a 'beru.' One beru was about five miles (walking at a rate of 2½ miles per hour using today's hours).

The End

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Temples and Ziggurats

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

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Ziggurats possibly owe their existence to early Sumerian temples being built on platforms. The land of Sumer was very flat and platforms would have raised the temples above the level of flood waters, keeping the temples dry when the rivers overflowed in the spring. For the picture of a temple built on a mud brick platform, [click here](#).

One of the more famous temples on a platform was the 'White Temple' in the city of Uruk, dated to 3000 - 3200 BCE. For a photo of the excavated ruin of this temple, [click here](#). For a picture of how the White Temple originally looked, [click here](#).

As a mud brick temple aged, its walls would begin to crumble and, eventually, it would have to be rebuilt. When that happened, the old mud brick walls were piled down and piled on top of the old foundation to form a higher platform for the new temple. As the platforms grew higher and higher, they became stepped.

Although ziggurats look like the ancient stepped pyramids of the Egyptians, they were never used as funerary structures. Instead, these monuments, crowned with temples or shrines, were intended to serve as stairways for gods ascending to or descending from heaven.

Architecturally, ziggurats measured about 60 meters long (200 feet) x 40 meters wide (130 feet), an area that would occupy about one third of a modern city block. In height, they varied, ranging as high as 21 meters (70 feet).

To see a photo of an unrestored ziggurat, [click here](#).

To see a spectacular photo of the ruin of a ziggurat at Borsippa, [click here](#).

To see a photo of the partially restored ziggurat at Ur, [click here](#). To see a drawing depicting how the ziggurat at Ur might have originally looked, [click here](#).

Sumerian ziggurats had four stages but later Babylonian and Assyrian ziggurats often had seven. For the picture of a seven-stepped ziggurat, as in the Biblical Tower of Babel, [click here](#).

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The Euphrates River

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'Buranunu' in Sumerian

'Purattu' in Akkadian

'Perath' in Hebrew

'Ufrat' in ancient Persian

'Euphrates' in Greek

'Al-Furât' in Arabic

'Firat' in Turkish

The Euphrates Today

The Euphrates River is 1,725 miles long, beginning in the Armenian plateau of Turkey. In Iraq, it flows across land laid down by alluvial deposits, a surface that is very flat. As far as 300 miles north of the Arabian/Persian Gulf, the surface of the land rises only 60 feet above the level of the Gulf. The result of this flatness is that the river easily floods and often changes course. It is easy to deflect river water onto the land for irrigation but difficult to drain the land afterwards, causing the fields to become increasingly

saline. In the case of permanent flooding, the terrain becomes a marsh.

Flooding on the Euphrates is caused by the melting of snow in the Armenian plateau. The lower Euphrates begins to rise at the end of March and usually reaches its maximum height by the end of May. The water level then gradually drops throughout the summer until it reaches its lowest level at the end of November.

The Euphrates is navigable from the Lower Sea (Arabian/Persian Gulf) to a series of rapids at Ana, just above Hit, where major bitumen springs are located. At Hit, the Euphrates is 750 feet wide. Below Hit, the width of the river narrows and averages 450 to 500 feet. The current of the lower Euphrates is very slow, not normally exceeding one mile per hour and often falling to a quarter of that speed. However, during spring flooding, the speed of the flow can increase to as much as five miles per hour.

Today, the Euphrates divides into two branches below Museyib, the primary or western branch called the Hindiya and the secondary or eastern branch called the Hilla.

The Euphrates in Ancient Times

The ancient Euphrates, which seems to have coursed about forty miles to the east of the present-day course, also appears to have had two branches. The primary branch, the western branch, flowing by Sippar, Nippur, Kisurra, Shuruppak, Uruk, Enegi, Ur, and Kuara, was most often referred to as the Euphrates River or the River of Sippar. The secondary branch, the shallower eastern branch, flowing by Adab, Dabrum, KI.AN, Zabalam, Umma, Nagsu, Bad-tibira, Larsa and Uruk was referred to as the Iturungal or the Iturungal Canal, due to the continual maintenance necessary to keep it open and navigable.

The Mouth of the Euphrates

Today the Euphrates joins the Tigris at Qurna and flows to the Arabian (or Persian) Gulf through the Shatt al Arab. In Sumerian times, the Euphrates flowed directly into the Gulf which was then called the Lower Sea (also called the Bitter Sea and the Sea of the Rising Sun).

The End

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"In the Days when Gods Walked

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The Tigris River

Facts about Ancient Sumer

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'Idigna' in Sumerian

'Idiklat' in Akkadian

'Hiddekel' in Hebrew

'Dijla' in Arabic

'Dicle' in Turkish

'Tigris' in Latin

The Tigris River is 1,150 miles long and begins on the Armenian plateau in Turkey. In Iraq, it receives additional water from four important tributaries: the Greater Zab, the Lesser Zab, the Adhem and the Diyala. As a result, the Tigris is more subject to catastrophic flooding than the Euphrates. Annual flooding usually results in the Tigris rising from 4½ to 9 feet, with a record rise of 27 feet in 1954.

The Tigris is navigable as far north as Mosul (near ancient Ninevah). In flood season, native rafts on floats, with loads as great as 35 tons, float the 275 miles between Mosul and Baghdad in three or four days. At Baghdad, the wood is sold and the skins for the floats are carried back upriver on the backs of donkeys. There is little traffic going upriver.

At Kut, the Tigris is about 1,300 feet wide and has a depth varying from a normal 4½

feet to 26 feet when flooding. The current at Kut ranges from 1¼ to as high as 4 miles per hour when flooding.

At Amara, the Tigris is only 600 feet wide with a depth ranging from a normal 6½ feet to 13 feet when flooding. Marshlands, starting near Amara, drain off much of the river water so that at Qurna, the depth remains the same but the river narrows to a width of only 200 feet.

Although the upper reaches of the Tigris are higher than the Euphrates, in southern Iraq the bed of the Tigris is lower than that of the Euphrates and the canals between the two rivers have their tailings in the Tigris, causing the water in these canals to flow from west to east..

Sometimes, at low water during midsummer, the lower Tigris has a depth of only 3 feet but, due to its many tributaries, the river is subject to sudden flooding.

The Tigris and Euphrates meet just below Qurna, from which point the Tigris is called the Shatt al Arab and is full of marshy water from the Euphrates and surrounding marshes. The combined waterway is 30 feet deep and more than 1,200 feet wide.

Rainfall at Basra is only 6½ inches a years, of which 5½ inches fall between April and October.

Two types of native boats were used on the Tigris River and Shatt al Arab, a round skin boat (skins stretched over a frame of willow branches) known as a coracle (Arabian = Quffa, Akkadian = Quppu) and a rectangular raft type known as a riverboat (Arabian = Kelek, Akkadian = Kalakku). The coracles principally go downriver but riverboats can be poled or towed upstream. With proper rigging, riverboats can also be sailed and rowed.

Like the Euphrates, the course of the lower Tigris has meandered and changed over the years. In ancient days, the Tigris either flowed where the Shatt al Gharraf is today, or the Tigris had a branch that flowed down the Shatt al Gharraf or, possibly, the Shatt al Gharraf started as a manmade canal through the marshes and the Tigris overflowed into it. The sites of the ancient cities of Girsu and Lagash are located on today's Shatt al Gharraf.

The End

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/a007tigriseuphratesmarshlands.html>

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"In the Days when Gods Walked

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The Tigris-Euphrates

Marshlands

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2002-4

Until the marshes of southern Iraq were drained during the last decade of the twentieth century, the average depth of water in the marshes during flood season was 3 to 5 feet with a maximum of 6 to 10 feet. Water depth during the summertime was less, completely drying up in some seasonal areas. The water in most marshes and lakes was fresh, but the water in Haur Al Hammar, the lake closest to the sea, was brackish.

During the hot, dry summers, daily marshland temperatures ranged from 68° at night to 104° Fahrenheit during the day with a maximum high of 122°. In the cold, wet winters, daily temperatures averaged from 41° to 59° Fahrenheit with a low of 12° F. Water temperatures in the marshes and lakes fluctuated from a low of 61° Fahrenheit in the winter to a high of 88° F midsummer.

Vegetation in the marshes of southern Iraq was dominated by the Common Reed (which grows 6 to 12 feet tall) and dominated the permanent marsh. Bulrush (cattails growing 3 to 6 feet tall) dominated the seasonal marshes. Cyperus Sedge was found throughout the marshes. The marshes had rich, spongy underwater vegetation while water lilies and duckweed covered a good part of the surface. The underwater vegetation supported shrimp and many species of fish while reeds, rushes and sedges supported diverse breeds of birds and wildfowl.

Many large mammal species were found in the marshes at the end of the twentieth century: wild boar, otter, jackal, red fox, Indian mongoose, gray wolf, honey badger, striped hyena, goitred gazelle and Indian crested porcupine. But lions had been wiped out early in the century when World War I introduced rifles to the area.

Small mammals found in the marshes at the end of the century included rats, mice, gerbils, hedgehogs and bandicoots.

The marshlands had long been inhabited. At mid twentieth century, the area of the marshlands fluctuated between 15,000 sq km (5,800 sq miles) and 20,000 sq km (7,700 sq miles). They were divided into three marshes: the Al Hammar Marsh which was south of the Euphrates River and included Haur Al Hammar Lake, the Central Marsh between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and the Al Hawizeh Marsh east of the Tigris River, on the Iraqi-Iranian border.

The native inhabitants of the marshes numbered up to 500,000 and were called Marsh Arabs, or Ma'dan. They and their domesticated water buffalo, introduced as early as c. 3500 BCE, farmed in the marshes.

After Saddam Hussain crushed the Shi'ite Revolt of March-April, 1991 in southern Iraq, the marshlands became a refuge for Shi'ites as well as Iraqi deserters from the Gulf War. The result was that the Iraqi government, starting in 1992, led by Saddam Hussain, built a system of dams, rivers and a canal, to drain the marshlands.

This series of developments was christened 'The Project of the Mother of Battles' and consisted of a 350-mile long canal named the 'Saddam River' (1992) that passed underneath the Euphrates River in an inverted siphon to keep water out of the Haur Al Hammar lake, the 'Mother of Battles River' (1994), a half-mile wide 'Prosperity River' that drains the Central Marsh and a 55-mile long 'Fidelity to the Leader Canal' (1997). As of the end of the twentieth century, the marshlands had been 95% drained, leaving behind a land that was desiccated and salt encrusted.

To read an English translation of Christ Kutschera's article on 'The Project of the Mother of Battles,' [click here](#).

To read an extremely detailed eyewitness account of 'The Project of the Mother of Battles' drainage program, [click here](#).

For a CIA map (ca 1994) showing the changes in the marshlands of southern Iraq, [click here](#).

The UN has issued an excellent 58-page report of the project entitled 'The Mesopotamian Marshlands: Demise of an Ecosystem.' The entire report, filled with photographs and maps, is available online in PDF format. [Click here](#).

The End

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/a013marshreclamation.html>

12 captures

22 Oct 2004 - 21 Jun 2024

May MAY Mar

20

2004 2006 2007

About this capture

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"And their descendents living
in the marshes of southern Iraq"

The way the marshlands of Iraq once looked.

Problems with the Iraqi

Marshlands

and their Reclamation

On May 1, 2003, speaking from the deck of the USS Lincoln, President George W. Bush declared an end to combat hostilities in Iraq. After 43 days, the war that started with a 'Shock and Awe' attack on Baghdad in the early hours of March 19th, was over.

War damage, both combat and collateral, was relatively light. The looting that followed, especially in urban areas, caused far greater harm. The insurgency that came after the pillaging was worse yet. But it too was mostly confined to urban areas.

In terms of devastation, the greatest occurred in southern Iraq predated the war. It had occurred years before. There, Saddam Hussein, as president of Iraq, destroyed 90% of the 20,000 sq km of marshland (7,500 square miles—an area the size of the state of Massachusetts).

In 1991, following the Gulf War, the Marsh Arabs, known as Ma'dan, joined the failed Shi'ite uprising. While the revolt on dry land was easily crushed by Hussein's troops, the Ma'dan remained largely unreachable. This was how they had survived for thousands of years. Whenever enemies came, they destroyed small dams built to control the flow of the rivers and retreated deep within the marshes where, surrounded by water and near-impenetrable beds of reeds, they waited for their attackers to give up and leave.

But the 1990s were different. Iraqi forces pursued, strafing them from helicopter gunships, until the adoption of a southern 'No Fly Zone' in 1992. After that, heavy artillery and weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons such as napalm and phosphorous, were used to clear the villagers. The government instituted an economic blockade of the marshlands, denying all access to medicines and medical care. Often those who survived were removed at gunpoint.

They were accused of joining opposition parties and participating in anti-government activities. Frequently, there was no foundation for such charges and Marsh Arabs arriving at the Abu Ghraib prison seemed dazed and helpless. According to former Captain Al-Janabi, a former Iraqi intelligence officer, in one day alone, two thousand prisoners, mainly Marsh Arabs, were executed. The ex-captain says many were buried at a nearby cemetery in a special section where only numbers were used for identification. The bodies of others were returned to their families for burial.

Generally, the regime was reluctant to give bodies back as it disrupted the secrecy of its

proceedings. Victims' families expected executions to be preceded by lengthy court hearings and to be documented in public records. Such records never existed for those Ma'dan arbitrarily arrested and killed.

The UN special envoy reported to the United Nations in 1994 that Iraqi government forces were conducting systematic military actions against the Marsh Arabs, attacking towns, killing or wounding civilians, then destroying their farms and houses. According to the diplomat's report, those who were arrested were blindfolded and abducted. Some of those arrested survived, albeit after undergoing horrific acts of torture lasting weeks or months; however, many were never heard from again. Rape was common.

Even after Hussein's army had quashed the revolt by slaughtering thousands of Ma'dan and attacking their villages, the Iraqi president was still bent on retribution. Under the guise of increasing agricultural acreage, he ordered the marshes drained.

To do this, he approved the construction of a massive network of canals, pipelines and dams. State-owned businesses and private firms were required to dispatch all their earth-moving equipment to work on the projects. Sunnis from Hussein's strongholds in central Iraq, including Tikrit and Fallujah, were encouraged to travel south to help.

The engineering feat was enormous—and remarkably successful. The Euphrates, which had flowed entirely into the southern half of the marshes, was diverted into a wide new canal called the Mother of All Battles River that stretched more than 100 miles around the former wetlands. Higher up the Euphrates, billions of gallons of water were redirected into a depression in the desert.

Environmentalists classified Saddam's draining of the marshes as a major ecological disaster, broadly comparable in extent and rapidity to the drying of the Aral Sea. However, in Saddam's case, the drainage was without any rational justification. What was left, after the land was drained, has been described as mostly desert with large salt-encrusted areas.

By 1999, according to the Brookings Institution, all but a handful of the 250,000 Marsh Arabs had been driven into exile or killed. The United Nations estimated in 2001 that "40,000 had made it into Iran as refugees, 20-40,000 still inhabited the remaining part of the marshes and 170,000 to 190,000 Marsh Arabs were either dead or displaced."

In 1994, Joseph Dellapenna, a professor at Villanova University Law School and an expert on international water rights, said Saddam Hussein, besides his other crimes, is "... also guilty of genocide against the Marsh Arabs."

Dellapenna noted that Hussein had ostensibly drained the marshes for agricultural purposes but had done nothing to develop the reclaimed land, leaving it to turn into a barren and salt-covered desert. This, more than anything else, Dellapenna told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, revealed the true intentions of the Iraqi leader. "What makes this a crime under international law was its purpose," he said. "And I think the purpose was fairly clear, which was to destroy a culture and to destroy a people. And that's genocide. And genocide is an international crime. It's a crime against humanity." Dellapenna said it was also an ecological crime, what he calls "ecocide," but noted there is no legal instrument under international law to prosecute anyone for the destruction of a unique ecological system.

In 2002, an analysis of Landsat satellite images showed the marshlands had shrunk 30% further, from 1084 square kilometers (418 square miles) in 2000 to 759 (293

square miles) in 2002. At this rate of loss, it was calculated that the marshes would vanish entirely within five years. In addition, in late 2002, Iraqi troops set fire to reeds on the Iraqi side of the al-Hawaizeh marsh (located along the Iraqi-Iranian border), possibly preparing for a renewed military assault on the last remaining Ma'dan villages.

In retrospect, it seems Saddam Hussein actually had three reasons for draining the marshes. First, was to improve military access to a remote border area which had been the scene of fierce fighting during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. Second, the Shi'as, encouraged by the United States, had openly rebelled against the government in 1991. Third, Baghdad had begun negotiations in 1992 with international oil companies who, in spite of international sanctions, were willing to do business with Saddam Hussein, in the development of new oil fields near the marshes.

Remarking on the new oil fields, Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the former French president, denounced the persecution and removal of the Marsh Arabs. She criticized the French, Chinese and Russian oil companies who were working with the Hussein regime to exploit oil in the southern marshes. She also lambasted the UN Security Council for passing puny resolutions that offered so little help. Mme. Mitterrand noted that while UNSCR 688 called for Iraq to "end its oppressive practices," article VII of the same resolution stated, "... objectives should be realized with the Iraqi government's cooperation." As she pointed out, "It was unlikely that Saddam Hussein would comply with, or have reason to fear, the resolution."

In March, 1995, the European Parliament adopted a resolution deploring the drainage of the marshes and the attacks upon the marsh dwellers. This resolution specifically refuted the assertion made by Hussein's government that the marshes were being drained for agricultural purposes and demanded that impartial observers be given a right of access to the marshes. Right of access was never granted.

Strangely, usually aggressive environmental groups took little public notice of the destruction of the marshes. When the war to oust Saddam Hussein started, Greenpeace International listed on its website as one of the five reasons for opposing the war that the conflict would "have devastating human and environmental consequences."

However, new groups had been organized to help the Ma'dan refugees and to try to bring to a stop the continuing destruction of the marshlands.

The first to become directly involved with the plight of the Sh'ia living in the marshes was Assisting Marsh Arabs and Refugees (AMAR), a British nonprofit organization founded in 1991 by Baroness Emma Nicholson. The baroness was at the time a Conservative member of the British Parliament. (She later became a British member of the European Parliament.) Within a few years, AMAR had built a structure to help support the 95,000 Marsh Arabs who had taken refuge in Iran, providing them with basic health care, clean water and essential education services. Also, during the years of Saddam's rule, AMAR monitored the difficulties facing the 30,000 Marsh Arabs being steadily squeezed into the shrinking remnant of the al-Hawaizeh marsh and attempted to publicize the inhumane actions of the Iraqi government.

In that same year, 1991, the Iraq Foundation, an American 501(C)3 non-profit corporation, was established in the United States by and for Marsh Arab expatriates. In 2003, Mr. and Mrs. Azzam Alwash, board members of the Iraq Foundation, working with the US State Department, set up a program named 'Eden Again Project' to assist those expats who wanted to return to their homes in the reclaimed marshlands. As set up, the project envisioned the marshlands being restored in their entirety.

In the spring of 2003, while the war was still in progress, the reflooding of the marshes got some inadvertent help from the Iraqi Army. Responding to Saddam's orders to destroy roads in the area in an attempt to prevent British forces from reaching Basra, Iraqi troops accidentally blew up one of his dams. As a result, 25 square kilometers of drained marshland were immediately reflooded. The destruction of that dam inspired Marsh Arabs to start destroying other dams and dykes themselves, so that a sizable area was reflooded by the end of the war.

Afterwards, Iraqi state irrigation engineers, returning to work under Coalition Authority, further helped revive the marshlands by opening the gates of one dam on the Euphrates and smashing some of the bulwarks that had diverted much of that river's water into The Mother of All Battles River. On its side of the border, Iran helped by opening a dam to assist in the reflooding.

In the summer of 2003, Baroness Nicholson said an organized effort was needed to get

heavy earth-moving equipment to fully disassemble the network of canals, pipelines and dams built to drain the marshes. She urged the United States to help.

The US State Department had already made a decision in 2002, before the war started, that if the opportunity occurred, they would do their best to assist the Marsh Arabs recover the marsh and their way of life. After the war ended, the State Department gave USAID, the overseas aid department of the US government, the task of making plans to help the Marsh Arabs.

A mission comprised of US scientists visited the marshlands in July and August of 2003, to sample the earth, water and air to see what help was needed. One of the questions that arose was how to reflood the land so as not to damage its chance for a full recovery.

Some US scientists, advising the US State Department, concluded the marshes were already beyond help and suggested that regeneration efforts would only make the ecological situation worse.

Pekka Haavisto, chairman of the Iraq Task Force of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), said completely reconstituting Iraq's marshes would require enormous supplies of water. This was because the drained wetlands not only had to be reflooded, but first flushed clean of thick encrustations of salt that were left behind when their waters evaporated, else the result would not be a reclaimed marshland but a wasteland of lifeless salt ponds instead.

However, finding the required amounts of water would not be easy. The only sources were the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which had originally formed the marshlands. But those rivers no longer had the flow they once had because countries upstream built dams to harness the water for electricity and irrigation. For example, the flow of the Euphrates at Nasiriyah, which had measured 106,000 gallons per second before 1991, was down to 21,000 gallons per second because of new dams and irrigation canals built over the past decade.

The essential point for a restoration of any sizable part of the marshlands was the need for a basin-wide plan which would involve not only Iraq but also the other riparian countries drawing water from the Tigris and Euphrates: Turkey and Syria.

Fully reviving Iraq's marshes will require convincing Ankara and Damascus to release more water to Baghdad at the expense of development projects in their own countries. But the prospects of either state doing so are not good. Iraq, Syria, and Turkey already have a decades-long history of arguing over how to share regional waters. Reviving the marshlands will now become yet another chapter in that dispute. As Haavisto noted, there are few issues in the world as contentious as trans-boundary river problems and, in the Mideast, where water is a precious commodity, they are particularly thorny. "People who have experience with trans-boundary river problems are not too optimistic

that these water-flow issues can be solved with the neighboring countries so the marshes could be refilled totally again. The most optimistic figure that I have heard would be around 30 percent recovery of the marshes."

Abandoned Ma'dan villages located in drained marshes look like Arab villages in any desert, including the middle of the Sahara. The only clues to their aquatic origins lie in crumbling, once-stately council houses, with cathedral-like spires, constructed entirely of bundles of reeds, now rotting.

"We broke the dams when the Iraqi army left," said Qasim Shalgan Lafta, 58, a former fisherman whose village sits marooned, along with a few cracked canoes, in a bleak landscape. "We want to teach our children how to fish, how to move on the water again."

On March 20, 2004 the Maysan Marsh Arab Council held its founding conference in Al Amarah to discuss the rehabilitation of Iraq's marshlands. The council's goal was to give the Ma'dan in Maysan Province a voice so their interests and concerns would be factored into the national and international plans that affect the marshes. One of the major issues raised was the allocation of whatever arable lands were reclaimed.

Ma'dan expatriates are returning to their ancestral lands, but those returning don't have the resources to control the water or halt the pollution. Their health has been damaged by lack of clean drinking water and discharges of untreated sewage into rivers that feed the marshland. Some have called the rising floodwater an environmental disaster and accuse American and Iraqi officials of using them as political tools. "I don't see any of the politicians coming to live in the marshes," said one Marsh Arab.

"The draining of the marshes was a symbol of Saddam's misrule, now everyone wants to be the hero who brings the water back," said Dr. Ali Nassar, the director of AMAR, the organization working closely with extant Marsh Arab communities.

Of the 200,000 people displaced, only a few thousand of the poorest have returned, mostly from the slums outside Baghdad and other cities. For Faleh, a tribesman who lives with his family in a little reed hut on an island measuring ten yards by four, there is a simple reason why his kin don't want to return. Life in the marshland is harsh.

"It's all very well to idealize the simple life of the marshes, but Westerners forget that marsh children died of swamp fever and malaria," a tribal chieftain near Basra said. "For some people, it's better to live on dry land with electricity in houses that aren't regularly flooded, near roads that take you to the city in less than an hour. The marshes were romantic, but we paid a heavy price."

Some scientists are worried that the hasty reflooding may have already caused serious ecological damage by sopping up large quantities of salt.

Arabs living in the marshes fear the Iraqi provisional administration, after bringing back

the waters, will now conveniently forget about them.

While doubts have been raised about the Iraqi transitional government, there are positive signs. The new environment ministry and Center for Restoration of the Iraqi Marshes are taking control of the project with enthusiasm. One member of the team will be Toronto-educated nuclear scientist Hussein Shahrstani, who turned down the job of Iraqi Prime Minister to accept a role as Director of the Iraq Academy of Science.

No one denies the problems are formidable. "The good news is that up to 35 per cent of the marshes have come back through haphazard efforts," Barry Warner of the Canadian International Development Agency says. "But the real question is, What is their long-term viability?"

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/a012ezrastomb.html>

42 captures

22 Oct 2004 - 4 Nov 2025

Jan MAY Jul

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2005 2006 2007

About this capture
James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
and their descendents
in the marshes of southern Iraq

Ezra's Tomb

Ezra's tomb is located on the west bank of the Tigris River at Al Azair (Al Uzayr), some 60 miles north of Basra, in what was the northeastern corner of the Central Marsh. It has long been a revered site, having been visited as long ago as the twelfth century by Benjamin of Tudela, Pethahiah of Regensburg and the poet, Yehuda Al-Harizi. It was described by Pethahiah as a tomb with a synagogue on one side and a mosque on the other.

According to Al-Harizi, a local shepherd had a dream that a holy person was buried nearby. After the dream recurred several times, he told his friends about it. To prove the veracity of his account, he showed them he could see again with an eye that had been blinded. On digging at the place in the dream, an iron coffin was found with unknown characters inscribed on it. These were interpreted by a Hebrew scribe to read, "Ezra, the Priest." So they ferried the remains across the river and re-interred them at Al Azair where, ever since according to Al-Harizi, a light has shined over them at night.

Ezra, a lineal descendant of Aaron, was a Hebrew high priest of the fifth century BCE. He was also a scribe and a scholar and is sometimes credited with writing the Biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah as well as a part of Chronicles. Tradition has it that he collected and edited the Old Testament canon, putting it into modern form.

Like King Josiah (639-608 BCE), Ezra was deeply involved in reforming Judaism. He was a leader of the second group of Jews who returned from Babylonian exile in 459 BCE. When they reached Jerusalem, Ezra was appalled at what he saw and set about reconstituting the religion. With the Age of Prophecy drawing to a close, he established the supremacy of Torah and in particular the Oral Law to make Judaism a religion in which the law was central. He also adopted the square Assyrian script which is still in use today. With some justice, Ezra has been called the father of Judaism since his efforts did much to give Jewish religion a lasting form.

Not much is known of the life of Ezra. The Bible records that, in 445 BCE, he appeared at the dedication of the reconstructed walls of Jerusalem and read the law aloud to the people. There's no record after that. Josephus wrote that he was buried in Jerusalem but both the time and place of his death are unknown.

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Watercolor (1919) by Leonard Ball - [Click here for larger view.](#)

1

<http://www.jameswbell.com/a010thezagrosmountains.html>

22 captures

20 Aug 2003 - 22 Dec 2023

Mar MAY Mar

20

2004 2006 2007

[About this capture](#)

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

The Zagros Mountains

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2002-3

The Zagros Mountains are parallel ranges of folded mountains, almost impassable when traveling east-west, that run some 1,100 miles, beginning near the Turkish border, southeast along the western border of Iran down to the Strait of Hormuz. Many of the ranges crest at 10,000 feet or above and the Zard Kuh, which is the highest peak in the Zagros, is almost 15,000 feet high. Snow is common throughout the ranges in winter and some higher peaks remain snow-covered throughout the year.

For a map of the Zagros Mountains, [click here](#).

For a space photo of the Zagros, [click here](#).

The Karun River, which starts in the Zagros near the Zard Kuh, twists through deep canyons with sheer mountain walls until it reaches the plain of Khuzestan (the current name for Luristan, once known as Susiana, a province of ancient Elam), through which it flows to the Arabian Gulf.

Huge salt domes, measuring as high as 5,000 feet high, are found near the center of the mountains. Oil and bitumen seeps and naphtha springs are found in the vicinity. The oil and bitumen seeps sometimes spontaneously ignite.

The mountains have mostly been denuded, leaving stands of oak and pistachio trees.

Animals found in the mountains include wild sheep and goats, wolves, bears, hyenas and leopards. Eagles nest in the higher elevations.

The valleys of the northern half of the Zagros support agriculture and are heavily populated. In the central range, shepherds graze their flocks in upland pastures. In the southern part, dates and cereal grains are grown in oases. From north to south, Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtiaris and Kashkais inhabit the mountains.

For a photo of a valley in the central Zagros, [click here](#).

There are tremendous climate differences in the Zagros, depending in large part on elevation. In the central range, weather varies from below 0 in winter on the mountaintops to winds from the southwest that scorch the lower elevations in summertime. Annual rainfall varies from 10 inches in the lower elevations to almost 20 inches on the crest.

Land of the Gods

In ancient days, the plain of Khuzestan was known as Susiana and the adjoining mountains to the southeast were known as Anshan, the two provinces making up a country called Elam, which can be interpreted as 'The Land of the Gods.' Elam was a long-lived country, often the enemy of the Sumerian city-states.

For a photo of a snow-covered mountain in the Zagros, [click here](#).

The End

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<http://www.peakware.com/encyclopedia/ranges/maps/zagros.htm>
46 captures
24 Feb 1999 - 11 Apr 2013
Nov DEC Apr
25
2004 2005 2013

About this capture
Peakware World Mountain Encyclopedia

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Zagros Mountains

Identify a region, mountain range, or prominent peak by pointing to it.
Then click to zoom. (sorry - feature under construction)

Zagros Mountains relief map

[Zardeh Kuh](#) | [Kuh e Dinar](#) | [Kuhellazaran](#) | [Kuh e Laleh Zar](#) | [Kuh e Kukalar](#) | [Kuh e Garbosh](#) | [Shir Kuh](#) | [Oshtoran Kuh](#) | [Kuh e Taftan](#) | [Kuh e Chihilta](#)

The above relief map depicts the Zagros Mountains as viewed from 512,000 feet (approx. 156 KM). Terrain coloring is used to accentuate elevation, and is not intended to be indicative of true snowline nor treeline.

[What's New?](#) | [Summit Logs](#) | [Bookstore](#) | [Gear Checklist](#) | [Highest Peaks](#)
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<http://www.jameswbell.com/a009tigriseuphratesweather.html>
14 captures
20 Aug 2003 - 25 Mar 2010
Jan MAY Jul
20
2004 2006 2007

About this capture

James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"

Tigris-Euphrates
Weather Statistics

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

Temperature Ranges
(in degrees Fahrenheit)

	at Babylon	at Basra
January	21° to 75°	24° to 81°
February	26° to 82°	31° to 84°
March	33° to 96°	40° to 92°
April	42° to 105°	53° to 100°
May	58° to 115°	60° to 114°
June	61° to 121°	70° to 111°
July	60° to 119°	71° to 114°
August	63° to 121°	69° to 114°
September	57° to 116°	60° to 109°
October	46° to 104°	53° to 101°
November	27° to 91°	36° to 92°
December	19° to 81°	30° to 77°

Hot weather begins about May and continues though September. By November, the weather is cool and then turns cold December through February, especially in the northern part of the country where temperatures often dip below freezing.

Winds and Precipitation

The months of March and April bring occasional thunder and sandstorms. The prevailing wind is from the north with the shamal coming from the northwest. The shamal starts around mid-June and blows intermittently for some forty days with a velocity that reaches as high as forty miles an hour. It dries the air and brings short term relief from the summer's heat.

The east wind brings high temperatures while the south wind brings dust. Sandstorms are most common in the spring.

Some of the shallow lakes in the southern part of the country are shaped by the direction and force of the wind, and can expand or contract a mile or two because of it. These changes may not take place gradually. There is a case known where the water

of a lake moved forward at a rate of 36 to 45 feet a minute when blown by a strong wind.

The rainfall in the southern part of the country is about 6½ inches, of which 5½ fall between October and April. The rain usually comes in sudden, short-lived storms of great violence, accompanied by hail and strong winds that cause much damage.

The End

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/iraq001weather.html>

17 captures

25 Jun 2003 - 27 May 2010

Jan MAY Jun

20

2004 2006 2007

About this capture

Current Weather in Iraq

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

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Current Weather in Kuwait

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Qatar

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Bahrain

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Saudi Arabia

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Turkey

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Israel

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Iran

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Jordan

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Afghanistan

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Pakistan

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Oman

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Yemen

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in the
United Arab Emirates

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/iraq002maplinks.html>

24 captures

6 Dec 2003 - 15 Sep 2024

Feb MAY Jun

20

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

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Iraq & Mesopotamian Map Links

Current Political Maps of Iraq

(in PDF format)

This is a set of three maps reflecting current political conditions.

The first map is a detailed map of Iraq showing boundaries and names of the provinces, including the provincial capitals. This map also shows the principal rivers, roads and railroads.

The second map shows Iraq's location in the mideast and the principal highways linking

it with its neighbors.

The third map of Iraq shows the original northern and southern 'no-fly zones' established in 1991 after the Gulf War and the subsequent extension in 1996 of the southern no-fly zone from 32° north latitude to 33°.

There are also links to other maps of Iraq.

These maps are in PDF format which require an Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you do not have the Acrobat Reader software in your computer, [click here](#) for a free download.

To view the maps, [click here](#). Note: the maps will take several minutes to load.

Detailed & Thematic Maps of Iraq

[Click here](#) for the collection of maps in the Perry-Castañeda Library at the University of Texas.

Iraq maps in this library include country maps, city maps, detailed maps, thematic maps and historical maps.

Also has many links to Iraq maps at other websites.

Map of Iraq Archaeological Sites and Ancient River Courses

For a fairly detailed black and white map of Iraq archaeological sites and ancient river courses, that traces the migration of the Sumerian people from the Zagros mountains west and south into the plain of Sumer (the plain of Shinar in the Bible), [click here](#).

Map of the Assyrian Empire

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To access the shockwave map, click here:

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1

<http://www.jameswbell.com/iraq003stats.html>

18 captures

26 Jun 2003 - 25 Mar 2010

Jan MAY Mar

20

2004 2006 2007

About this capture

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Iraq - Statistics

Statistics for Iraq

The area of Iraq (168,727 sq. miles) is only a little larger than the state of California (155,973 sq. miles).

The population of Iraq (24,001,816) is significantly less than the population of California (33,145,121) but much of the land in Iraq is left uncultivated (87.33% or 147,350 sq. miles) primarily because of a lack of rain. The rain, which falls between November and May, measures only 4 to 10 inches per year on the central plain. Rainfall does increase up to 40 inches per year in the Zagros Mountains, especially in the northeastern area of the country.

Many of the statistics on the linked pages are expressed in metric units. Click here for

a good, easy-to-use conversion site to convert metric units of measurement into American units or vice versa.

For Iraq statistics from the 2002 World Fact Book, [click here](#).

For Iraq statistics from Global Security, [click here](#).

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/a012ezrastomb.html>

42 captures

22 Oct 2004 - 4 Nov 2025

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About this capture
James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
and their descendents
in the marshes of southern Iraq

Ezra's Tomb

Ezra's tomb is located on the west bank of the Tigris River at Al Azair (Al Uzayr), some 60 miles north of Basra, in what was the northeastern corner of the Central Marsh. It has long been a revered site, having been visited as long ago as the twelfth century by Benjamin of Tudela, Pethahiah of Regensburg and the poet, Yehuda Al-Harizi. It was described by Pethahiah as a tomb with a synagogue on one side and a mosque on the other.

According to Al-Harizi, a local shepherd had a dream that a holy person was buried nearby. After the dream recurred several times, he told his friends about it. To prove the veracity of his account, he showed them he could see again with an eye that had been blinded. On digging at the place in the dream, an iron coffin was found with unknown characters inscribed on it. These were interpreted by a Hebrew scribe to read, "Ezra, the Priest." So they ferried the remains across the river and re-interred them at Al Azair where, ever since according to Al-Harizi, a light has shined over them at night.

Ezra, a lineal descendant of Aaron, was a Hebrew high priest of the fifth century BCE. He was also a scribe and a scholar and is sometimes credited with writing the Biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah as well as a part of Chronicles. Tradition has it that he collected and edited the Old Testament canon, putting it into modern form.

Like King Josiah (639-608 BCE), Ezra was deeply involved in reforming Judaism. He

was a leader of the second group of Jews who returned from Babylonian exile in 459 BCE. When they reached Jerusalem, Ezra was appalled at what he saw and set about reconstituting the religion. With the Age of Prophecy drawing to a close, he established the supremacy of Torah and in particular the Oral Law to make Judaism a religion in which the law was central. He also adopted the square Assyrian script which is still in use today. With some justice, Ezra has been called the father of Judaism since his efforts did much to give Jewish religion a lasting form.

Not much is known of the life of Ezra. The Bible records that, in 445 BCE, he appeared at the dedication of the reconstructed walls of Jerusalem and read the law aloud to the people. There's no record after that. Josephus wrote that he was buried in Jerusalem but both the time and place of his death are unknown.

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Watercolor (1919) by Leonard Ball - [Click here for larger view.](#)

1

<http://www.jameswbell.com/a010thezagrosmountains.html>

22 captures

20 Aug 2003 - 22 Dec 2023

Mar MAY Mar

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2004 2006 2007

[About this capture](#)

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

The Zagros Mountains

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2002-3

The Zagros Mountains are parallel ranges of folded mountains, almost impassable when

traveling east-west, that run some 1,100 miles, beginning near the Turkish border, southeast along the western border of Iran down to the Strait of Hormuz. Many of the ranges crest at 10,000 feet or above and the Zard Kuh, which is the highest peak in the Zagros, is almost 15,000 feet high. Snow is common throughout the ranges in winter and some higher peaks remain snow-covered throughout the year.

For a map of the Zagros Mountains, [click here](#).

For a space photo of the Zagros, [click here](#).

The Karun River, which starts in the Zagros near the Zard Kuh, twists through deep canyons with sheer mountain walls until it reaches the plain of Khuzestan (the current name for Luristan, once known as Susiana, a province of ancient Elam), through which it flows to the Arabian Gulf.

Huge salt domes, measuring as high as 5,000 feet high, are found near the center of the mountains. Oil and bitumen seeps and naphtha springs are found in the vicinity. The oil and bitumen seeps sometimes spontaneously ignite.

The mountains have mostly been denuded, leaving stands of oak and pistachio trees. Animals found in the mountains include wild sheep and goats, wolves, bears, hyenas and leopards. Eagles nest in the higher elevations.

The valleys of the northern half of the Zagros support agriculture and are heavily populated. In the central range, shepherds graze their flocks in upland pastures. In the southern part, dates and cereal grains are grown in oases. From north to south, Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtiaris and Kashkais inhabit the mountains.

For a photo of a valley in the central Zagros, [click here](#).

There are tremendous climate differences in the Zagros, depending in large part on elevation. In the central range, weather varies from below 0 in winter on the mountaintops to winds from the southwest that scorch the lower elevations in summertime. Annual rainfall varies from 10 inches in the lower elevations to almost 20 inches on the crest.

Land of the Gods

In ancient days, the plain of Khuzestan was known as Susiana and the adjoining mountains to the southeast were known as Anshan, the two provinces making up a country called Elam, which can be interpreted as 'The Land of the Gods.' Elam was a long-lived country, often the enemy of the Sumerian city-states.

For a photo of a snow-covered mountain in the Zagros, [click here](#).

The End

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14 captures

20 Aug 2003 - 25 Mar 2010

Jan MAY Jul

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2004 2006 2007

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James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Tigris-Euphrates

Weather Statistics

Facts about southern Iraq and Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2002-3

Temperature Ranges

(in degrees Fahrenheit)

	at Babylon	at Basra
January	21° to 75°	24° to 81°
February	26° to 82°	31° to 84°
March	33° to 96°	40° to 92°
April	42° to 105°	53° to 100°
May	58° to 115°	60° to 114°

June	61° to 121°	70° to 111°
July	60° to 119°	71° to 114°
August	63° to 121°	69° to 114°
September	57° to 116°	60° to 109°
October	46° to 104°	53° to 101°
November	27° to 91°	36° to 92°
December	19° to 81°	30° to 77°

Hot weather begins about May and continues though September. By November, the weather is cool and then turns cold December through February, especially in the northern part of the country where temperatures often dip below freezing.

Winds and Precipitation

The months of March and April bring occasional thunder and sandstorms. The prevailing wind is from the north with the shamal coming from the northwest. The shamal starts around mid-June and blows intermittently for some forty days with a velocity that reaches as high as forty miles an hour. It dries the air and brings short term relief from the summer's heat.

The east wind brings high temperatures while the south wind brings dust. Sandstorms are most common in the spring.

Some of the shallow lakes in the southern part of the country are shaped by the direction and force of the wind, and can expand or contract a mile or two because of it. These changes may not take place gradually. There is a case known where the water of a lake moved forward at a rate of 36 to 45 feet a minute when blown by a strong wind.

The rainfall in the southern part of the country is about 6½ inches, of which 5½ fall between October and April. The rain usually comes in sudden, short-lived storms of great violence, accompanied by hail and strong winds that cause much damage.

The End

[Go Back to the Fact Menu](#)

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/iraq001weather.html>

17 captures

25 Jun 2003 - 27 May 2010

Jan MAY Jun

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2004 2006 2007

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Current Weather in Iraq

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

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Current Weather in Kuwait

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and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Qatar

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Bahrain

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Saudi Arabia

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Turkey

[Click city name to get weather specifics
and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Israel

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and a 5-day forecast]

Current Weather in Iran

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Current Weather in Jordan

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Current Weather in Pakistan

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Current Weather in Oman

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and a 5-day forecast]
Current Weather in Yemen
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and a 5-day forecast]
Current Weather in the
United Arab Emirates
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24 captures

6 Dec 2003 - 15 Sep 2024

Feb MAY Jun

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About this capture
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Iraq & Mesopotamian Map Links
Current Political Maps of Iraq
(in PDF format)

This is a set of three maps reflecting current political conditions.

The first map is a detailed map of Iraq showing boundaries and names of the provinces, including the provincial capitals. This map also shows the principal rivers, roads and railroads.

The second map shows Iraq's location in the mideast and the principal highways linking it with its neighbors.

The third map of Iraq shows the original northern and southern 'no-fly zones' established in 1991 after the Gulf War and the subsequent extension in 1996 of the southern no-fly zone from 32° north latitude to 33°.

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To view the maps, click [here](#). Note: the maps will take several minutes to load.

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<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps//iraq.html>

2,993 captures

7 Jun 2001 - 29 Nov 2025

Apr MAY Jun

18

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Iraq (632K) From Iraq: Country Profile, 2003 and Entire Map with insets (1.2MB) and Factoids Erratum
 Middle East Graphic (Special Reference Graphic) NIMA 2003 (1MB)
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 Al Basrah (Special Reference Graphic) NIMA 2003 (2MB)
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 Al Mawsil (Mosul) (Special Reference Graphic) NIMA 2003 (1.8MB)
 Baghdad From Central and Southern Iraq [map], CIA, February 2003 (250K)
 Baghdad (Special Reference Graphic) NIMA 2003 (1.5M)
 Baghdad CIA 1992 (206K)
 Baghdad U.S. Dept. of State 1981 (98K)
 Central Baghdad 1998 (428K) Kenny Hopper, University of Texas
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 Al Mawsil [Mosul]-Arbil Region, Northern Iraq (tactical pilotage chart) original scale 1:500,000 Portion of Defense Mapping Agency TPC G-4B 1989 (927K) Not for navigational use
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 Turkey (wall map) 2002 Includes Northern and Central Iraq, Shows Air Bases. Inset map of Tigris and Euphrates Drainage Basin
 Thematic Maps
 Iraq: Administrative Divisions From Atlas of the Middle East, CIA, 1993 (69K)
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 Iraq: Country Information From Atlas of the Middle East, CIA, 1993 (128K) Flag and statistics, not a map
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 Iraq: Distribution of Ethnoreligious Groups and Major Tribes From Iraq: Country Profile

[map], CIA, January 2003 (215K) and pdf format (216K)

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Iraq - Marshes - Former Marshes and Water Diversion Projects in Southeastern Iraq From The Destruction of Iraq's Southern Marshes, CIA Publication IA 94-10020, 1994 (243K)

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Iraq: Time Line From Atlas of the Middle East, CIA, 1993 (210K) Chart

Kurdish Areas in the Middle East and the Soviet Union 1986 (254K)

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Kurdish Lands (location map) From Iraq: A Map Folio, CIA, 1992 (235K)

Historical Maps

Babylon From Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division, 1944 (173K)

Babylon 1829 (229K) From Travels in Chaldaeia, including a journey from Bussorah to Bagdad, Hillah, and Babylon, performed on foot in 1827, published by Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, London, 1829.

Baghdad 1849 (176K) Part of "The River Euphrates From Hit to the Kuthah River and The River Tigris from Sammara to the Abu Hitti Canal..." from Maps volume, sheet VII of The Expedition for the Survey of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris, Carried on by Order of the British Government in the years 1835, 1836, and 1837... by Francis Rawdon Chesney. London, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1850.

Baghdad 1944 From Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division, 1944 (346K)

Baghdad 1961 Baghdad Bus Map (708K) and map cover and route information (291K)

Basra Area 1942 (423K) map key and scale (185K) Part of sheet H-38 L Basra. Edition

June 1942. Original scale 1:253,440 Compiled and Reproduced by India Field Survey Company, December 1942. Published by the U.S. Army Map Service, May 1943.
Erbil 1944 From Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division, 1944 (238K)

Iraq: Ballistic-Missile-Related Facilities From Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, U.S. Director of Central Intelligence, October 2002 (37K)

Iraq: CW-Related Production and Declared Sites of Deployed Alcohol-Filled or Chemical Agent-Filled Munitions During Desert Storm From Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, U.S. Director of Central Intelligence, October 2002 (62K)

Iraq: Declared BW-Related Sites From Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, U.S. Director of Central Intelligence, October 2002 (52K)

Iraq: Declared Nuclear Facilities From Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, U.S. Director of Central Intelligence, October 2002 (39K)

Iraq Oil Industry Operations 1953 From Iraq Today. Directorate-General of Propaganda, Baghdad, 1953

Iraqi Missile Capabilities From Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, U.S. Dept. of Defense, April 1992 (338K)

Iraq Tourist Map - North, Iraq Tourist Map - South and map legend from Iraq Tourist Map. Iraq Tourism Administration, ca. 1970 (935K)

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Kuwait Historical Maps 1987-1991

Mosul 1944 From Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division, 1944 (317K)

Tigris and Euphrates Near Baghdad, Ancient and Modern Courses From Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Great Britain. Naval Intelligence Division, 1944 (209K)

Other Middle East Historical Maps

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Iraq (hot-maps.de)

Iraq (Knowers Ark Educational Foundation)

Iraq (Lonely Planet)

Iraq (National Geographic)

Iraq (Robert Pelton)

Iraq (UniMaps)

Iraq [January 2004] (United Nations) [pdf format]

Iraq (UN Office of the Iraq Programme)

Iraq - 3-D Flyover Map (Jutland Post) [TurnTool format]

Iraq - Airfields (WFP/ReliefWeb)

Iraq - Airfields - Maps and Imagery (GlobalSecurity.org)
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Iraq - Cities (GlobalSecurity.org)
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Iraq - Cultural and Background Information (Washington Post)
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Iraq - Ethnic and Religious Groups (Christian Science Monitor)
Iraq - Kurd/Sunni/Shia (GlobalSecurity.org)
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About this capture

Chaldeans, Chaldo, Syrians, Syriacs, Assy

Welcome to the home of the indigenous Aramaic-speaking Christian Assyrians.

On behalf of the Assyrians living in the United State and throughout the world, we extend our thoughts and condolences to the families of the victims and to the American nation during the tragic acts of barbaric terrorism inflicted towards all of humanity.

The Assyrians, although representing but one single nation as the direct heirs of the ancient Assyrian Empire, are now doctrinally divided, inter sese, into five principle ecclesiastically designated religious sects with their corresponding hierarchies and distinct church governments, namely, Church of the East, Chaldean, Maronite, Syriac Orthodox and Syriac Catholic. These formal divisions had their origin in the 5th century of the Christian Era. No one can coherently understand the Assyrians as a whole until he can distinguish that which is religion or church from that which is nation -- a matter which is particularly difficult for the people from the western world to understand; for in the East, by force of circumstances beyond their control, religion has been made, from time immemorial, virtually into a criterion of nationality. The Assyrians have been referred to as Aramaean, Aramaye, Ashuri, Ashureen, Ashuraya, Ashuroyo, Aturaya, Jacobite, Kaldany, Kaldu, Kasdu, Malabar, Maronite, Maronaya, Nestorian, Nestornaye, Oromoye, Suraya, Syrian, Syriani, Suryoye, Suryoyo and Telkeffee. — Assyrianism verb

The Assyrians of today are the indigenous Aramaic-speaking descendants of the ancient Assyrian people, one of the earliest civilizations emerging in the Middle East, and have a history spanning over 6750 years. Assyrians are not Arabian, we are not Kurdish, our religion is not Islam. The Assyrians are Christian, with our own unique language, culture and heritage. Although the Assyrian empire ended in 612 B.C., history is replete with recorded details of the continuous presence of the Assyrian people till the present time.

January 2, 1915
The Holocaust Continues

AssyriaPlundering, massacres and destruction of seventy of Urmia's villages in the plains. "There was absolutely no human power to protect these unhappy people from the savage onslaught of the invading hostile forces. It was an awful situation. At midnight the terrible exodus began; a concourse of 25,000 men, women, and children, Assyrians and Armenians, leaving cattle in the stables, all their household hoods and all the supply of food for winter, hurried, panic-stricken, on a long and painful journey to the Russian border, enduring the intense privations of a foot journey in the snow and mud, without any kind of preparation... it was a dreadful sight... many of the old people and children died along the way." (The Death of a Nation, pp. 119-120)

Statement of the German Missionaries

"The latest news is that four thousand Assyrians and one hundred Armenians have died of disease alone, at the mission, within the last five months. All villages in the surrounding district with two or three exceptions have been plundered and burnt; twenty thousand (20,000) Christians have been slaughtered in Armenia and its environs. In Haftewan, a village of Salmas, 750 corpses without heads have been recovered from the wells and cisterns alone. Why? Because the commanding officer had put a price on every Christian head... In Dilman crowds of Christians were thrown into prison and driven to accept Islam." (The Death of a Nation, pp. 126-127)

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April 26, 1916
"The Syxes - Picot Agreement"

Great BritainFranceRussiaDuring World War I, the powerful countries of Great Britain, France and Russia met to decide on the Partition of the Ottoman Empire's territories after the war had ended. In what was called, "The Syxes - Picot Agreement", April 26th - October 23rd, 1916, in which Mosul (Nineveh) was decided to be zoned as a territory under France's control.

NOTE: This secret agreement was made public by the new Bolshevik Government of Russia after the revolution (this agreement was to remain top secret and confidential.)

1919

Peace Conference in Paris, France

France Three Assyrian groups were scheduled to participate in the Peace Conference in Paris, France; Assyrian delegates from the United States, Iraq and Iran.

The Assyrian group from Iran arrived first, included S. Ganja, L. George and L. Yacoboff, and since Great Britain feared the presence of a group which she can not control, not having much authority in Iran, the British forced the Assyrian delegate of Iran to leave Paris and not participate.

Then the Assyrian delegate from the USA arrived which included: S. Raji, M. Shakour, A. Barsoom, B. Bakous, A. Ablahad, A. K. Yousuf, R. Najeeb, G. Zabouni, S. A. Namiq and Rev. J. E. Werda.

Their demands were basically to establish an Assyrian independent territory including northern Bet Nahren beginning from the lower Zab River, Diyar Bakir and extending to the Armenian mountains and under the protection of the super powers.

Rev. Joel Werda in his petition concluded;

Assyria "We have the most conclusive proofs to show that the Assyrians were urged by the official representatives of Great Britain, France and Russia, to enter into the war on the side of the Allies, and were induced into a state of belligerency with the most solemn promises of being given a free state. The Assyrians, therefore, having risked the very existence of their nation, and having made such appalling sacrifices upon the altar of freedom, demand that these promises of the Allied governments now be honorably redeemed."

Great Britain and the US delegates denied the petition explaining that the US president F. Wilson is having strong reserves from any plans to divide Turkey. The Assyrians from the USA returned empty handed.

The Assyrian delegate from Iraq after too many delays by the British authorities was approved to travel on July 21st, but on one condition, to pass by London, England first. There, Surma Khanim, the head of the delegate was kept in London until the conference of France finished its deliberations.

Surma's demands were very realistic which were to allow the Assyrians to return to Hakkari, basic freedoms, the release of all prisoners and the punishment of the criminals responsible for the atrocities committed against the Assyrians.

April 19, 1920 - Treaty of Sèvres
Between Great Britain, Allies and Turkey

United StatesGreat BritainEuropeTurkeyRussiaThis treaty, signed on August 10, 1920, put the foundations for the new Turkish frontier post World War I. Assyrians were not permitted by Great Britain to participate in these deliberations under the ground rule that the Assyrians were not an equal power with the rest of the participants. But the Assyrian issue was discussed and the scheme was to contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities under articles 62, 63, 140, 141, 142, 147, 148, 149, and 150 and as a result of this treaty, Mosul (NINEVEH, Assyria) was given to Iraq while France was guaranteed 25% of Mosul (Nineveh)'s oil production.

Article 62 of the Treaty states:

"... this plan must provide complete guarantees as to the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other ethnic or religious minorities in this area. To this end, a commission made up of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives will visit the area so as to determine what adjustments, if any, should be made to the Turkish frontier wherever it coincides with Persian frontier as laid down in this treaty."

November 20, 1922 - Treaty of Lausanne
Between the Allied powers and Turkey

United StatesGreat BritainEuropeTurkeyRussiaThe Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, took place after Turkey requested that the issue of Mosul (Nineveh) needed to be re-examined again. Assyrians once again were not allowed to participate as Great Britain stood in their way, but again they were promised that their rights will be protected, worth mentioning that Agha Petros, General of the Assyrian Army, attended the opening ceremonies. The United States stood beside Great Britain in these deliberations as the latter promised 20% of the oil industry business to be awarded to American companies. Turkey lost its appeal to win Mosul (Nineveh) back based on Great Britain's claims that this region will be saved for the future settlement of the Kurdish and Assyrian people, and no final agreement was reached.

Article 39 of the treaty states:

"There will be no official restriction on any Turkish citizen's right to use any language he wishes, whether in private, in commercial dealings, in matter of religion, in print or at a public gathering. Regardless of the existence of an official language, appropriate facilities will be provided for any non-Turkish-speaking citizen of Turkey to use his own language before the court."

May 21, 1924 - The Constantinople Conference
Between Great Britain and Turkey

Great Britain Turkey The Assyrians were told that Britain is fighting their case for them and that there is no need for them to attend. A letter on behalf of the Assyrians and their settlement was written under the direction of Sir Henry Conway Dobbs, the British High Commissioner in Iraq, under "Statement of Proposals for the Settlement of the Assyrian People in Iraq", in that regard.

The government of Turkey, claimed that Mosul (Nineveh) is part of Turkey and Fet'hi Beg declared that the Assyrians, who he referred to them as Nestorians, are welcomed to live in their previous lands in Turkey where they will find freedom. Sir Percy Cox, stated that Mosul (Nineveh) belongs to Iraq and that the Christian Assyrians need protection from Turkey.

This was part of his statement;

"...His Majesty's Government has decided to endeavor to secure a good treaty frontier, which will at the same time admit of the establishment of the Assyrians in a compact community within the limits of the territory in respect of which His Majesty's Government hold a mandate under the authority of the League of Nations, if not in every case in their ancestral habitation, at all events in suitable adjacent districts. This policy for the settlement of the Assyrians has the full sympathy and support of the Iraqi Government, which is prepared for its part, to give the necessary cooperation for giving effect thereto."

No agreement was reached at the end. Turkey then massed its troops on the border to occupy the Mosul (Nineveh) Province by force. The Assyrian Levy Force of 2000 were sent north to protect Iraq, since the Iraqi army at this time was unfit to undertake such task. The Assyrian force was largely responsible for the annexation of Mosul (Nineveh) to Iraq rather than to Turkey, as an official of the League of Nations stated.

August 6, 1924
Britain's Request to League of Nations

United Nations Great Britain Britain requested from the League of Nations to look into the issue of the borders between Iraq and Turkey. And a Frontiers Commission was established to look into the matter on Oct. 21, 1924.

June 16, 1925
Recommendation of League of Nations

United Nations The Commission presented its findings and suggested the importance of protecting the Assyrians if they were to return to Turkey, their freedom, reimbursements for all their losses during the Great War and the full authority of the Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun, over his people.

Recommendations were not approved upon. And it was finally recommended that the issue should be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, an integral part of the charter of the League of Nations which was later replaced by the International Court of Justice after the birth of the United Nations.

September, 1925 - "The Hague"
The Permanent Court of International Justice

Took over the disputed border line issue and in Dec. 1925, adopted a resolution which refused the idea of the Assyrians return to Hakkari and gave that region to Turkey, while giving Mosul (Nineveh) to Iraq and settling on a border line almost matching the same status quo line which was called the Brussel Line and recommended the continuation of the British mandate on Iraq another 25 years to safeguard the Assyrian interests.

June 5, 1926
Treaty between Britain and Turkey

Great BritainTurkeyTreaty between Britain and Turkey was signed settling the issue of the borders and Mosul (Nineveh) province. Hence Britain gained possession of Mosul (Nineveh)'s rich oil fields and set out to deny the rights of the Assyrians.

In July 1927, Captain Fowraker, a Levy officer who spoke Assyrian fluently, became incharge of the settlement issue. He noticed that Assyrians were scattered all over north of Iraq, in contradiction to the League of Nation's decision to settle the Assyrians in a "Homogeneous Enclave".

November 11, 1927
Human Rights of Assyrians

United NationsThe Assyrians continued to protest about their mistreatment and continued to send letters to the League of Nations which requested a report from both of the governments of Britain and Iraq about the situation. The Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, did not accept the reports of Britain and Iraq and requested from both countries to fulfill their obligations towards the Assyrians.

November 13, 1928
British Treaties and Assyrian Petitions

Great BritainBritain dropped the earlier established recommendations by the Mandate Commission and declared that those recommendations should be directed to the Turkish Government and not the Iraqi government, since Hakkari is the original homeland of the Assyrians and those who escaped have no intentions to return to Turkey. Hence, they should occupy whatever land the Iraqi government has provided for them.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Council-General in Baghdad stated earlier on June 25, 1928;

Turkey" The Turkish Amnesty Law did not cover the Assyrians, who would not be permitted in any circumstances to enter Turkey; And that any Assyrian who attempted to enter Turkey would be punished."

Iraq Several treaties were signed and ratified between Britain and Iraq in the next two years in what seemed to be Britain's preparations to clear the way for Iraq to enter the League of Nations.

Assyria Three petitions were received by the Mandate Commission stressing the fears of the Assyrians regarding the termination of the Mandate; they were dated in Sept. 1931, Oct. 20, 1931 and Oct. 23, 1931. One of these was rejected by Sir Francis Humphrys on the grounds that it was submitted by Captain Rassam (Hermiz Rassam's son) who was not qualified to represent the Assyrians even though it was given to him by the Assyrian Patriarch but he, Humphrys, still pledged the 'moral responsibility' of Great Britain to the future attitude of the Iraqi government.

The Oct. 23, 1931 petition was submitted by His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, in Mosul (Nineveh), asking for permission to allow the Assyrians to leave Iraq before the end of the Mandate since it would be impossible for the Assyrians to live in Iraq. This decision was reached at with the agreement of all the Assyrian leaders and when responses to this petition were delayed, the Assyrians decided to take action and planned for a general 'cessation of service' by all the Levies.

United Nations The Mandate Commission reviewed the Assyrian petition and was still not satisfied with Britain and Iraq's assurances of protection of Minorities. Worth mentioning here that Sir Humphrys was accused by his own fellow British officials to fabricate lies in regards to the Iraqi government's sentiments about the Assyrians.

The Mandate Commission gave its recommendations, stating that they are concerned about the Christians, and accordingly, average people were given the right to submit any petitions to the League of Nations, directly, in the future.

Iraq In partial compliance with requests of the petition, the Iraqi government set up a further land-finding committee. It discovered but little land both cultivable and available. In fact, they found malaria-ridden, swampy lands, and in their usual obnoxious style, recommended expenditure on an irrigation scheme to produce more. Hundreds upon hundreds of Assyrians died with malaria in those lands.

United Nations The Council of the League of Nations accepted the recommendations and Iraq issued a declaration guaranteeing the protection of minorities on May 30, 1932.

Accordingly Iraq was accepted in the League of Nations on October 3, 1932.

December 5, 1932
Mar Eshai Shimun in Geneva

United NationsThe Assyrian national question was taken to Geneva by the Assyrian Patriarch, His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII again when he addressed the Permanent Mandate Commission meeting and urged the Council to fulfill its obligations toward the Assyrian Nation. The League yet again granted the Assyrians their rights of homogenous community in Iraq with a local autonomy.

This was discussed again in Dec. 15th, 1932.

August, 1933
The Assyrians are Massacred

The New York Times
August 19, 1933

"The Nestorian Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, Patriarch of the Assyrians, who has been under detention for some time for having declined to sign a declaration of loyalty to King Faisal and agree not to thwart the scheme of the League of Nations for the settlement of the Assyrians, was deported by the order of the government today (August 18, 1933) and deprived of Iraqi nationality.

The British air officer commanding in Iraq was present at the Hinaidi airdrome when Mar Shimun left in a British machine for Jerusalem en route to Cyprus...."

The Argus Newspaper (published in Melbourne, Australia)
August 21, 1933

"In accordance with the Iraq government's deportation order, the Patriarch Mar Shimun left today (August 19, 1933) in a Royal Air Force airplane, by way of Palestine, for Cyprus, where his father and brother have also been given asylum..."

The Sydney Morning Herald
August 21, 1933

"The press reports quoted above say that His Holiness left Hinaidi airdrome in a British aircraft for Cyprus by way of Palestine. But, did the British Royal Air Force plane fly His Holiness (and those with Him) direct to Cyprus after stopping in Palestine? Material dug up by Romeo Hanna tells us it did not. It tells that His Holiness disembarked in Palestine and was flown to Cyprus in another British RAF machine several days later. What we Assyrians of Australia find interesting about the material is that this second British RAF machine was piloted by an Australian pilot who at the time was stationed in Basra."

Related Information

1918: The Assyrians of Shamizdin, Turkey

1933: The Assyrians of Khabur, Syria

August - 1933

At the village of Kouba near Bab Chikchik, four Assyrians were attacked. Two were killed and two were wounded. (The British Betrayal of the Assyrians, p. 166)

August 4-5, 1933

Eight Assyrian soldiers were killed, during the fight with the Iraqi army on the Syrian-Iraqi borders. (The Assyrian Tragedy, p. 49)

August 7, 1933

The Iraqi army returned to Mosul (Nineveh) and right through its way began a systematic massacre. At the same time the Qaimaqam of Zakho, Ahmed al-Dibuni tortured 46 Assyrians to death. (The Assyrian Tragedy, p. 52)

August 11-16, 1933:

The Simele Massacre

"The Assyrian population of the village of Simel was indiscriminately massacred; men women, and children alike. In one room alone, 81 Assyrians from Baz were barbarously massacred. Priests were tortured and their bodies mutilated. Girls were raped and women violated and made to march naked before the Arab army commanders. Holy books were used as fuel for burning girls. Children were run over by military cars. Pregnant women were bayoneted. Children were flung in the air and pierced on to the points of bayonets. In Dohuk 600 Assyrians were killed." (The Assyrian Tragedy, p. 53-54)

Description of the Massacre

"Suddenly and without the least warning the troops opened fire upon the defenseless Assyrians. Many fell, including women and children, and the rest ran into the houses to take cover... A cold blooded and methodical massacre of all the men in the village followed... This took some time. Not that there was any hurry, for the troops had the whole day ahead of them. Their opponents were helpless and there was no chance of any interference from any quarter whatsoever. Machine gunners set up their guns outside the windows of the houses in which the Assyrians had taken refuge, and having trained them on the terror-stricken wretches in the crowded rooms, fired among them until not a man was left standing in the shambles. In some other instances the blood lust of the troops took a slightly more active form and men were dragged out and shot or bludgeoned to death and their bodies thrown on a pile of dead. (The Tragedy of the Assyrians, p. 172)

It is estimated that 3000 Assyrians were massacred during the August of 1933. (British Betrayal of the Assyrians.)

October 1933

Mar Eshai Shimun in Geneva with Yousuf Malik

United Nations After the Simele massacre the Council of the League of Nations was absolutely sure that the Assyrian issue was still an unsolved problem. The Assyrian Patriarch requested the League to form an Assyrian and Kurdish enclave in the north of the province of Mosul (Nineveh) under a special administration. The Patriarch reminded the Council about such plan which was originally suggested by Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Minister, on Dec. 17, 1919. In Iraq Rashid Ali Al-Gailani, the Iraqi Prime Minister, announced that the Assyrians should find a new home outside Iraq and promised that the Iraqi government is willing to make very generous contributions to cover any expenses of such settlement. On Oct. 13, 1933, the League of Nations appointed a committee of six of its members to look into this possibility. On Oct. 24, the Assyrians submitted another petition by Yousuf Malik, an Assyrian Nationalist from Iraq who was exiled to Lebanon and who moved between Cypress, Beirut and Damascus exposing what was going on inside Iraq and the British games. This petition gives details to a lot of cases of oppression against the Assyrians in Iraq and details on hardships from government officials and the facts about the Semele massacre.

From October 1933 to June of 1935 the committee of six looked into many options, they covered Brazil, British Guiana, Niger (in Africa) and they all failed. A further suggestion that the British Red Cross might send a relief party to Mosul (Nineveh) was also objected to, apparently on the grounds that this would discourage the activities of the Iraqi Crescent, which has not carried out any relief work among the Assyrians. In Sept. 1935, the plan of settling of some of the Assyrians in the Khabour / Ghab areas in Syria was approved. History shows that the plan was never followed up with and it has failed.

Things did not change for the Assyrians in Iraq until the outbreak of World War II, when the Iraqis revolted under Rashid Ali Al-Gailani who sided himself with Germany and wanted to force the British out of Iraq completely. The faith of the British existence in Iraq hanged in the hands of the 1500 Assyrian Levis ability to hold the British Air Force Base in Habbaniya against the Rebels of over 60,000 Arab tribesmen and regular troops who surrounded the base.

The Battle of Habbaniya is well described in the book, "The Golden Carpet" by Somerset De Chair, a British intelligence officer served in Iraq during W.W.II. The Assyrians have saved Iraq from falling in Germany's hands.

May 7, 1945 - United Nations

Mar Eshai Shimun in San Francisco

United NationsThe United Nations was born in San Francisco (replacing the League of Nations).

The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, was there to present the Assyrian petition (Assyrian National Petition) to the new world body of peace and was accompanied by two members of the Assyrian National Federation. In this petition the Assyrian tragedy was explained from World War I until the end of World War II.

Several petitions from the Patriarch in 1945 and 1946 were sent to the Secretary General of the United Nations to look into the Assyrian National Question. A letter from the UN General Secretary # 1100-1-4/MEJ dated Oct. 7, 1946 was received by Mar Shimun stating that he has referred the Patriarch's petition to the Commission on Human Rights.

March 13, 1947 - Petition to the UN General Secretary about the Assyrian Massacres in Iran.

United NationsA petition concerning the Assyrian Massacres in Iran was filed again by Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. He struggled for over a half century at the League of Nations, then the United Nations, all in vain. The 'new order' would not hear of it, this was a new world, the nations of the Axis Powers had to be forgiven and appeased, the Arabs had to be rewarded so that they could suppress their people and allow cheap oil to flow to the West. This was no time to talk about the sacrifices of the Assyrian people. As for human rights, the Allies were embarrassed to consider that such a small nation-church had been their "Smallest Ally".

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The Tragedy of the Assyrians (Stafford)
Yousif Malik (Nathir)

Who Are The Assyrians

Do you have any related information or suggestions?

<http://www.nineveh.com/whoarewe.htm>

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April 26, 1916
"The Sykes - Picot Agreement"

Great Britain France Russia During World War I, the powerful countries of Great Britain, France and Russia met to decide on the Partition of the Ottoman Empire's territories after the war had ended. In what was called, "The Sykes - Picot Agreement", April 26th - October 23rd, 1916, in which Mosul (Nineveh) was decided to be zoned as a territory under France's control.

NOTE: This secret agreement was made public by the new Bolshevik Government of Russia after the revolution (this agreement was to remain top secret and confidential.)

1919
Peace Conference in Paris, France

France Three Assyrian groups were scheduled to participate in the Peace Conference in Paris, France; Assyrian delegates from the United States, Iraq and Iran.

The Assyrian group from Iran arrived first, included S. Ganja, L. George and L. Yacoff, and since Great Britain feared the presence of a group which she can not control, not having much authority in Iran, the British forced the Assyrian delegate of Iran to leave Paris and not participate.

Then the Assyrian delegate from the USA arrived which included: S. Raji, M. Shakour, A. Barsoom, B. Bakous, A. Ablahad, A. K. Yousuf, R. Najeeb, G. Zabouni, S. A. Namiq and Rev. J. E. Werda.

Their demands were basically to establish an Assyrian independent territory including northern Bet Nahren beginning from the lower Zab River, Diyar Bakir and extending to the Armenian mountains and under the protection of the super powers.

Rev. Joel Werda in his petition concluded;

Assyria "We have the most conclusive proofs to show that the Assyrians were urged by the official representatives of Great Britain, France and Russia, to enter into the war on the side of the Allies, and were induced into a state of belligerency with the most solemn promises of being given a free state. The Assyrians, therefore, having risked the very existence of their nation, and having made such appalling sacrifices upon the altar of freedom, demand that these promises of the Allied governments now be honorably redeemed."

Great Britain and the US delegates denied the petition explaining that the US president F. Wilson is having strong reserves from any plans to divide Turkey. The Assyrians from the USA returned empty handed.

The Assyrian delegate from Iraq after too many delays by the British authorities was approved to travel on July 21st, but on one condition, to pass by London, England first. There, Surma Khanim, the head of the delegate was kept in London until the conference of France finished its deliberations.

Surma's demands were very realistic which were to allow the Assyrians to return to Hakkari, basic freedoms, the release of all prisoners and the punishment of the criminals responsible for the atrocities committed against the Assyrians.

April 19, 1920 - Treaty of Sèvres
Between Great Britain, Allies and Turkey

United States Great Britain Europe Turkey Russia This treaty, signed on August 10, 1920, put the foundations for the new Turkish frontier post World War I. Assyrians were not permitted by Great Britain to participate in these deliberations under the ground rule that the Assyrians were not an equal power with the rest of the participants. But the Assyrian issue was discussed and the scheme was to contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities under articles 62, 63, 140, 141, 142, 147, 148, 149, and 150 and as a result of this treaty, Mosul (NINEVEH, Assyria) was given to Iraq while France was guaranteed 25% of Mosul (Nineveh)'s oil production.

Article 62 of the Treaty states:

"... this plan must provide complete guarantees as to the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other ethnic or religious minorities in this area. To this end, a commission made up of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives will visit the area so as to determine what adjustments, if any, should be made to the Turkish frontier wherever it coincides with Persian frontier as laid down in this treaty."

November 20, 1922 - Treaty of Lausanne
Between the Allied powers and Turkey

United StatesGreat BritainEuropeTurkeyRussiaThe Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, took place after Turkey requested that the issue of Mosul (Nineveh) needed to be re-examined again. Assyrians once again were not allowed to participate as Great Britain stood in their way, but again they were promised that their rights will be protected, worth mentioning that Agha Petros, General of the Assyrian Army, attended the opening ceremonies. The United States stood beside Great Britain in these deliberations as the latter promised 20% of the oil industry business to be awarded to American companies. Turkey lost its appeal to win Mosul (Nineveh) back based on Great Britain's claims that this region will be saved for the future settlement of the Kurdish and Assyrian people, and no final agreement was reached.

Article 39 of the treaty states:

"There will be no official restriction on any Turkish citizen's right to use any language he wishes, whether in private, in commercial dealings, in matter of religion, in print or at a public gathering. Regardless of the existence of an official language, appropriate facilities will be provided for any non-Turkish-speaking citizen of Turkey to use his own language before the court."

May 21, 1924 - The Constantinople Conference
Between Great Britain and Turkey

Great BritainTurkeyThe Assyrians were told that Britain is fighting their case for them and that there is no need for them to attend. A letter on behalf of the Assyrians and their settlement was written under the direction of Sir Henry Conway Dobbs, the British High Commissioner in Iraq, under "Statement of Proposals for the Settlement of the Assyrian People in Iraq", in that regard.

The government of Turkey, claimed that Mosul (Nineveh) is part of Turkey and Fet'hi Beg declared that the Assyrians, who he referred to them as Nestorians, are welcomed to live in their previous lands in Turkey where they will find freedom. Sir Percy Cox, stated that Mosul (Nineveh) belongs to Iraq and that the Christian Assyrians need protection from Turkey.

This was part of his statement;

" ...His Majesty's Government has decided to endeavor to secure a good treaty frontier, which will at the same time admit of the establishment of the Assyrians in a compact community within the limits of the territory in respect of which His Majesty's Government hold a mandate under the authority of the League of Nations, if not in every case in their ancestral habitation, at all events in suitable adjacent districts. This policy for the settlement of the Assyrians has the full sympathy and support of the Iraqi Government, which is prepared for its part, to give the necessary cooperation for giving effect thereto."

No agreement was reached at the end. Turkey then massed its troops on the border to occupy the Mosul (Nineveh) Province by force. The Assyrian Levy Force of 2000 were sent north to protect Iraq, since the Iraqi army at this time was unfit to undertake such task. The Assyrian force was largely responsible for the annexation of Mosul (Nineveh) to Iraq rather than to Turkey, as an official of the League of Nations stated.

August 6, 1924
Britain's Request to League of Nations

United NationsGreat BritainBritain requested from the League of Nations to look into the issue of the borders between Iraq and Turkey. And a Frontiers Commission was established to look into the matter on Oct. 21, 1924.

June 16, 1925
Recommendation of League of Nations

United NationsThe Commission presented its findings and suggested the importance of protecting the Assyrians if they were to return to Turkey, their freedom, reimbursements for all their losses during the Great War and the full authority of the Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun, over his people.

Recommendations were not approved upon. And it was finally recommended that the issue should be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, an integral part of the charter of the League of Nations which was later replaced by the International Court of Justice after the birth of the United Nations.

September, 1925 - "The Hague"
The Permanent Court of International Justice

Took over the disputed border line issue and in Dec. 1925, adopted a resolution which refused the idea of the Assyrians return to Hakkari and gave that region to Turkey, while giving Mosul (Nineveh) to Iraq and settling on a border line almost matching the same status quo line which was called the Brussel Line and recommended the continuation of the British mandate on Iraq another 25 years to safeguard the Assyrian interests.

June 5, 1926

Treaty between Britain and Turkey

Great Britain Turkey Treaty between Britain and Turkey was signed settling the issue of the borders and Mosul (Nineveh) province. Hence Britain gained possession of Mosul (Nineveh)'s rich oil fields and set out to deny the rights of the Assyrians.

In July 1927, Captain Fowraker, a Levy officer who spoke Assyrian fluently, became incharge of the settlement issue. He noticed that Assyrians were scattered all over north of Iraq, in contradiction to the League of Nation's decision to settle the Assyrians in a "Homogeneous Enclave".

November 11, 1927

Human Rights of Assyrians

United Nations The Assyrians continued to protest about their mistreatment and continued to send letters to the League of Nations which requested a report from both of the governments of Britain and Iraq about the situation. The Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, did not accept the reports of Britain and Iraq and requested from both countries to fulfill their obligations towards the Assyrians.

November 13, 1928

British Treaties and Assyrian Petitions

Great Britain Britain dropped the earlier established recommendations by the Mandate Commission and declared that those recommendations should be directed to the Turkish Government and not the Iraqi government, since Hikkarri is the original homeland of the Assyrians and those who escaped have no intentions to return to Turkey. Hence, they should occupy whatever land the Iraqi government has provided for them.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Council-General in Baghdad stated earlier on June 25, 1928;

Turkey "The Turkish Amnesty Law did not cover the Assyrians, who would not be permitted in any circumstances to enter Turkey; And that any Assyrian who attempted to enter Turkey would be punished."

Iraq Several treaties were signed and ratified between Britain and Iraq in the next two years in what seemed to be Britain's preparations to clear the way for Iraq to enter the League of Nations.

Assyria Three petitions were received by the Mandate Commission stressing the fears of the Assyrians regarding the termination of the Mandate; they were dated in Sept. 1931, Oct. 20, 1931 and Oct. 23, 1931. One of these was rejected by Sir Francis Humphrys on the grounds that it was submitted by Captain Rassam (Hermiz Rassam's son) who

was not qualified to represent the Assyrians even though it was given to him by the Assyrian Patriarch but he, Humphrys, still pledged the 'moral responsibility' of Great Britain to the future attitude of the Iraqi government.

The Oct. 23, 1931 petition was submitted by His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, in Mosul (Nineveh), asking for permission to allow the Assyrians to leave Iraq before the end of the Mandate since it would be impossible for the Assyrians to live in Iraq. This decision was reached at with the agreement of all the Assyrian leaders and when responses to this petition were delayed, the Assyrians decided to take action and planned for a general 'cessation of service' by all the Levies.

United NationsThe Mandate Commission reviewed the Assyrian petition and was still not satisfied with Britain and Iraq's assurances of protection of Minorities. Worth mentioning here that Sir Humphrys was accused by his own fellow British officials to fabricate lies in regards to the Iraqi government's sentiments about the Assyrians.

The Mandate Commission gave its recommendations, stating that they are concerned about the Christians, and accordingly, average people were given the right to submit any petitions to the League of Nations, directly, in the future.

IraqIn partial compliance with requests of the petition, the Iraqi government set up a further land-finding committee. It discovered but little land both cultivable and available. In fact, they found malaria-ridden, swampy lands, and in their usual obnoxious style, recommended expenditure on an irrigation scheme to produce more. Hundreds upon hundreds of Assyrians died with malaria in those lands.

United NationsThe Council of the League of Nations accepted the recommendations and Iraq issued a declaration guaranteeing the protection of minorities on May 30, 1932.

Accordingly Iraq was accepted in the League of Nations on October 3, 1932.

December 5, 1932
Mar Eshai Shimun in Geneva

United NationsThe Assyrian national question was taken to Geneva by the Assyrian Patriarch, His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII again when he addressed the Permanent Mandate Commission meeting and urged the Council to fulfill its obligations toward the Assyrian Nation. The League yet again granted the Assyrians their rights of homogenous community in Iraq with a local autonomy.

This was discussed again in Dec. 15th, 1932.

August, 1933
The Assyrians are Massacred

The New York Times
August 19, 1933

"The Nestorian Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, Patriarch of the Assyrians, who has been under detention for some time for having declined to sign a declaration of loyalty to King Faisal and agree not to thwart the scheme of the League of Nations for the settlement of the Assyrians, was deported by the order of the government today (August 18, 1933) and deprived of Iraqi nationality.

The British air officer commanding in Iraq was present at the Hinaidi airdrome when Mar Shimun left in a British machine for Jerusalem en route to Cyprus...."

The Argus Newspaper (published in Melbourne, Australia)
August 21, 1933

"In accordance with the Iraq government's deportation order, the Patriarch Mar Shimun left today (August 19, 1933) in a Royal Air Force airplane, by way of Palestine, for Cyprus, where his father and brother have also been given asylum..."

The Sydney Morning Herald
August 21, 1933

"The press reports quoted above say that His Holiness left Hinaidi airdrome in a British aircraft for Cyprus by way of Palestine. But, did the British Royal Air Force plane fly His Holiness (and those with Him) direct to Cyprus after stopping in Palestine? Material dug up by Romeo Hanna tells us it did not. It tells that His Holiness disembarked in Palestine and was flown to Cyprus in another British RAF machine several days later. What we Assyrians of Australia find interesting about the material is that this second British RAF machine was piloted by an Australian pilot who at the time was stationed in Basra."

Related Information

1918: The Assyrians of Shamizdin, Turkey

1933: The Assyrians of Khabur, Syria

August - 1933

At the village of Kouba near Bab Chikchik, four Assyrians were attacked. Two were killed and two were wounded. (The British Betrayal of the Assyrians, p. 166)

August 4-5, 1933

Eight Assyrian soldiers were killed, during the fight with the Iraqi army on the Syrian-Iraqi borders. (The Assyrian Tragedy, p. 49)

August 7, 1933

The Iraqi army returned to Mosul (Nineveh) and right through its way began a systematic massacre. At the same time the Qaimaqam of Zakho, Ahmed al-Dibuni tortured 46 Assyrians to death. (The Assyrian Tragedy, p. 52)

August 11-16, 1933:
The Simele Massacre

"The Assyrian population of the village of Simel was indiscriminately massacred; men, women, and children alike. In one room alone, 81 Assyrians from Baz were barbarously massacred. Priests were tortured and their bodies mutilated. Girls were raped and women violated and made to march naked before the Arab army commanders. Holy books were used as fuel for burning girls. Children were run over by military cars. Pregnant women were bayoneted. Children were flung in the air and pierced on to the points of bayonets. In Dohuk 600 Assyrians were killed." (The Assyrian Tragedy, p. 53-54)

Description of the Massacre

"Suddenly and without the least warning the troops opened fire upon the defenseless Assyrians. Many fell, including women and children, and the rest ran into the houses to take cover... A cold blooded and methodical massacre of all the men in the village followed... This took some time. Not that there was any hurry, for the troops had the whole day ahead of them. Their opponents were helpless and there was no chance of any interference from any quarter whatsoever. Machine gunners set up their guns outside the windows of the houses in which the Assyrians had taken refuge, and having trained them on the terror-stricken wretches in the crowded rooms, fired among them until not a man was left standing in the shambles. In some other instances the blood lust of the troops took a slightly more active form and men were dragged out and shot or bludgeoned to death and their bodies thrown on a pile of dead. (The Tragedy of the Assyrians, p. 172)

It is estimated that 3000 Assyrians were massacred during the August of 1933. (British Betrayal of the Assyrians.)

October 1933
Mar Eshai Shimun in Geneva with Yousuf Malik

United Nations After the Simele massacre the Council of the League of Nations was absolutely sure that the Assyrian issue was still an unsolved problem. The Assyrian Patriarch requested the League to form an Assyrian and Kurdish enclave in the north of the province of Mosul (Nineveh) under a special administration. The Patriarch reminded the Council about such plan which was originally suggested by Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Minister, on Dec. 17, 1919. In Iraq Rashid Ali Al-Gailani, the Iraqi Prime Minister, announced that the Assyrians should find a new home outside Iraq and

promised that the Iraqi government is willing to make very generous contributions to cover any expenses of such settlement. On Oct. 13, 1933, the League of Nations appointed a committee of six of its members to look into this possibility. On Oct. 24, the Assyrians submitted another petition by Yousuf Malik, an Assyrian Nationalist from Iraq who was exiled to Lebanon and who moved between Cypress, Beirut and Damascus exposing what was going on inside Iraq and the British games. This petition gives details to a lot of cases of oppression against the Assyrians in Iraq and details on hardships from government officials and the facts about the Semele massacre.

From October 1933 to June of 1935 the committee of six looked into many options, they covered Brazil, British Guiana, Niger (in Africa) and they all failed. A further suggestion that the British Red Cross might send a relief party to Mosul (Nineveh) was also objected to, apparently on the grounds that this would discourage the activities of the Iraqi Crescent, which has not carried out any relief work among the Assyrians. In Sept. 1935, the plan of settling of some of the Assyrians in the Khabour / Ghab areas in Syria was approved. History shows that the plan was never followed up with and it has failed.

Things did not change for the Assyrians in Iraq until the outbreak of World War II, when the Iraqis revolted under Rashid Ali Al-Gailani who sided himself with Germany and wanted to force the British out of Iraq completely. The faith of the British existence in Iraq hanged in the hands of the 1500 Assyrian Levis ability to hold the British Air Force Base in Habbaniya against the Rebels of over 60,000 Arab tribesmen and regular troops who surrounded the base.

The Battle of Habbaniya is well described in the book, "The Golden Carpet" by Somerset De Chair, a British intelligence officer served in Iraq during W.W.II. The Assyrians have saved Iraq from falling in Germany's hands.

May 7, 1945 - United Nations
Mar Eshai Shimun in San Francisco

United NationsThe United Nations was born in San Francisco (replacing the League of Nations).

The Assyrian Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, was there to present the Assyrian petition (Assyrian National Petition) to the new world body of peace and was accompanied by two members of the Assyrian National Federation. In this petition the Assyrian tragedy was explained from World War I until the end of World War II.

Several petitions from the Patriarch in 1945 and 1946 were sent to the Secretary General of the United Nations to look into the Assyrian National Question. A letter from the UN General Secretary # 1100-1-4/MEJ dated Oct. 7, 1946 was received by Mar Shimun stating that he has referred the Patriarch's petition to the Commission on Human Rights.

March 13, 1947 - Petition to the UN General Secretary about the Assyrian Massacres in Iran.

United Nations A petition concerning the Assyrian Massacres in Iran was filed again by Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. He struggled for over a half century at the League of Nations, then the United Nations, all in vain. The 'new order' would not hear of it, this was a new world, the nations of the Axis Powers had to be forgiven and appeased, the Arabs had to be rewarded so that they could suppress their people and allow cheap oil to flow to the West. This was no time to talk about the sacrifices of the Assyrian people. As for human rights, the Allies were embarrassed to consider that such a small nation-church had been their "Smallest Ally".

References:

The Assyrian Question (Dr. Dadisho)
The Assyrians and the Assyrian Question (Matfiev)
The Death of a Nation (Yohannan)
The First Civilization (Alexander)
The Flickering Light of Asia (Werda)
The Tragedy of the Assyrians (Stafford)
Yousif Malik (Nathir)

Who Are The Assyrians

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Who Are The Assyrians

Who Are The Assyrians?

Nicholas Aljeloo

The Assyrian Australian Academic Society (TAAAS), Sydney, Australia

July 2, 2000

Introduction

Although uniting the children of one nation through their ancestral language, the term “Syriac-speaking” also allows much space for them to divide themselves into Assyrians, Chaldeans, Aramaeans, Syriacs, Syrians, Maronites, and the list goes on. It does not allow for one national designation for one people. Some may disagree but the people that call themselves any of the above things today are Syriac-Speaking or of a Syriac-Speaking background and heritage and hence are of Assyrian origin. Many issues disputing whether they are Assyrian, apart from the concept of self determination, can be answered by some statements and research made by eminent historians and scholars, purely from a historical and scholarly perspective. In this paper I shall set out to demonstrate first of all about whom we can say are Assyrians, the regions inhabited by Assyrians in the Middle East and what Assyrians have always called themselves. I have gathered and shall be using the opinions of eminent scholars to back up these arguments and using them I shall make apparent the origin of the word Syriac itself, linking to the ancient Assyrians. Although the research has not yet been exhausted, it has been proven without a doubt that all “Syriacs” are Assyrians.

The Political Dictionary of the Modern Middle East[1] defines Assyrians as, “Remnants of the people of ancient Mesopotamia, succeeding the Sumero-Akkadians and the Babylonians as one continuous civilization. They are among the first nations who accepted Christianity. They belong to one of the four churches: the Chaldean Uniate, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Syrian Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Due to the ethnic-political conflict in the Middle East, they are better known by these ecclesiastical designations. The Assyrians use classical Syriac in their liturgies while the majority of them speak and write a modern dialect of this language. They constitute the third largest ethnic group in Iraq with their communities in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, Russia and Armenia. Today they remain stateless and great numbers of them have left their homeland and settled in Western Europe, the United States and Australia.” The author of this fails to mention the members of the Syriac Maronite Church as Assyrians or to recognise the existence of non-Christian Assyrians.[2]

The Assyrian homeland encompasses what was once the core of the Assyrian Empire of antiquity and are now the areas of northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, southeastern Turkey and northeastern Syria, although there are Assyrian communities all over the Middle East, especially Lebanon. Northern Iraq includes the regions of Mosul, Dohuk, ‘Aqra and Zibar, Mezuriyeh, Gourzan (Gahra), Supna (Amadiya), Zakho and Adiabene (Arbil and Kirkuk). Southeastern Turkey includes the Assyrian regions of Hakkari (Hakkari), Van, Bohtan (Cizre), Bedlis (Bitlis), ‘Ayn-Sliwa / ‘Ayn-Slibo (Siirt), Amed / Omed (Diyarbakir), Lagga / Lago (Lice), Tur-‘Abdin (Jebel Toor), Mirda / Merdo (Mardin), Siverek, Tella-Shleela (Viransehir), Kharput (Harput), Malatya, Perin (Adiyaman), Palu, Gerger, Shmeishat (Samsat), Urhay / Urhoy (Sanliurfa), and ‘Ayn-Tawa / ‘Ayn-Towo (Gaziantep). Northwestern Iran includes the Assyrian region of Urmia and Salamast and northeastern Syria includes the Khabour region, the Euphrates valley and the villages around Aleppo. Now, though, Assyrians no longer inhabit many of these places as a result of the persecutions that are the topic of today’s seminar.[3]

The Assyrians, whatever their region of origin, call themselves “Surayeh / Suroyeh” and their language “Surit / Surayt” according to their plentiful dialects[4]. Those of the Nineveh Plains and those of the southern and eastern regions of Hakkari in southeastern Turkey call themselves “Sorayeh” and their language “Surath”, those of the northern and central regions of Hakkari and Van in southeast Turkey and Salamast in northwestern Iran call themselves “Su-reh” and their language “Soorit”, those of the Urmian regions of northwestern Iran call themselves “Surayi” or “Suryayi” and their language “Suyrit” or “Suyrayi”, and those of the regions to west of the Tigris River in southeastern Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, call themselves “Suroyeh” or “Suryoyeh” and their language “Surayt” or “Suryoyo”. To be sure, many opinions have been expressed about this name, but relatively few of them have approached the truth.

It is safe to say that the ethnic, national, civic, administrative and other aspects of Assyrian daily life stopped being written and preserved by the Assyrians after the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC, with the exception of the few periods when the smaller Assyrian kingdoms of Adiabene, Haran and Osroene were in power. Thus, Assyrian history entered a national literary vacuum and began to live its long period of foreign manipulation.

The Word “Syriac” - its Meaning and Link to Assyrian The name “Assyrian” is read differently in different languages. In the Egyptian hieroglyphics it is read as “Isur”[5], in ancient Assyrian Aramaic and latter Syriac records, “Athor / Othor”, in Biblical Hebrew and Arabic Assyrian is translated variously as “Ashouri” or “Athouri”, in Greek Assyria becomes “Assyrios” and Assyrians, “Assyrioi”.

In accordance with the law of phonetics[6] “Athoraya / Othuroyo” has changed to “Assuraya / Ossuroyo” because in the evolution of certain words we see that the letter “TH” changes into “S”. According to these phonetic rules, the sounds T, TH, S and SH are all interchangeable. The change of sound from “TH” to “S” is noticeable in the dialects of the Assyrians of Sena (Sanandaj, Iran)[7], Margosoreh (near Zakho, Iraq) and S’irt (Siirt, Turkey)[8] in the Eastern group of dialects and those of Mlahso / Mlahtho and ‘Ansha (near Diyarbakir, Turkey)[9] and Bo-Qisyon / Ba-Qisyan (in Tur-‘Abdin, Turkey) in the western group. The Assyrians of these villages pronounce the word “qriytha / qriytho” as “qriysa / qriyso” (village) and the word “Allahutha / Alohutho” as “Allahusa / Alohuso” (divinity). By the same law of phonetics it becomes very easy to identify the word “Assuraya / Ossuroyo” with “Suraya / Suroyo”. [10]

We may also say that “Suraya / Suroyo” comes from “Ashuraya / Ashuroyo”. As Dr. John A. Brinkman[11] points out, the name Ashur is written the same way, in cuneiform, for different usages and was only prefixed with different syllables signifying city, god, or country (matu – the modern Assyrian mata / motho). Around 1000 BC, the pronunciation of Ashur changed to Assur[12], again showing the interchangeability of the letters SH and S. Probably as early as 337 BC when Alexander the Great and his men passed through Assyria, they called the “Ashurians” they met “Assurioi” not only because of the new pronunciation of Ashur, but also because they do not have the letter SH in their

alphabet and it is also a non-existent sound in the Hellenic language.

What we now know as Syria once consisted of several city-states, which were later incorporated into the Assyrian Empire. The region became known as 'Abar-Nahra' ('Across the River') by the Assyrians, Babylonians and later by the Persians. The Greeks and the Romans knew it as Syria, short for Assyria, because it had long remained under Assyrian rule[13]. When, in 64 BC the Roman Emperor Pompey annexed the land west of Euphrates and incorporated them into the Roman Empire, the area came to be known as Syria, short for Assyria, as Assyria proper lay within the boundaries of the Persian Empire[14]. As The Encyclopedia Americana writes, under the entry Syria, "It is now certain that the name "Syria" is derived from the older "Assyria"[15]

Herodotus, a well-known Greek historian from the mid-fifth century BC, clearly indicates that the word "Syrian" is merely a Greek corruption of the word "Assyrian". He describes the Assyrian infantry in the Persian Army during the rule of King Xerxes (485-465 B.C.) as follows:

"The Assyrians went to war with helmets upon their head, made of brass, and plated in strange fashion, which is not easy to describe... These people, whom Greeks call Syrian, are called Assyrian by the barbarians. The Babylonians serve at their rank"[16]

The last part of this passage has also been translated as, "The Greeks call these people Syrians, but others know them as Assyrians."[17]

In the first century prior to the dawn of Christianity, the geographer Strabo (64 BC-21 AD from Amisos in Pontus) confirms Herodotus' statement by writing that,

"When those who have written histories about the Syrian empire say that the Medes were overthrown by the Persians and the Syrians by the Medes, they mean by the Syrians no other people than those who built the royal palaces in Babylon and Ninus (Nineveh); and of these Syrians, Ninus was the man who founded Ninus, in Aturia (Assyria) and his wife, Semiramis, was the woman who succeeded her husband... Now, the city of Ninus was wiped out immediately after the overthrow of the Syrians. It was much greater than Babylon, and was situated in the plain of Aturia."[18]

Strabo also lists several of the traditional cities (including Nineveh and 'Calachene' [Kalhu]) in the Assyrian heartland, which he calls 'Aturia'.

Mor Michael the Great, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East (1166 - 1199), wrote[19] that those who inhabit the land to the west of the Euphrates River were properly called Syrians, and by analogy, all those who speak the same language, which he calls Aramaic (Aramaya / Oromoyo), both east and west of the Euphrates to the borders of Persia, are called Syrians. He continues that the basis of the Syriac language is from Edessa (Sanliurfa, Turkey). Even more interesting is his list[20] of the names of peoples who possessed writing. Among them are "Aturayeh d-hawiyn Suryayeh /

Othuroye d-hawiyn Suryoyeh” (“Assyrians”, i.e. “Syrians”), by which presumably he means the ancient Assyrians, whom he identifies with his contemporary speakers of Syriac. This book by a learned native speaker shows the continuous equating of the terms “Syrian” and “Assyrian” for many Eastern Christians. His late Holiness, in his famous history book, also makes mention that, “It has been shown by Assyrian and Chaldean kings that they used the Aramaic language and were familiar with its literature” and that, “They are all, then, usually named; the Chaldeans by their old name and the Ashurayeh / Oshuroyeh, i.e. Athorayeh / Othuroyeh, are called after Ashur who settled Nineveh. This is what Eusebius says. The Jewish writer Josephus, calls Ashur Assur, as in the Greek language, and makes mention of, Assur, the ancestor of the Assurayeh / Ossuroyeh, who built Nineveh. He mentions that the Chaldeans are those that with the Assyrians (Assurayeh / Ossuroyeh) and Aramaeans form the Syriac (Suryayeh / Suryoyeh) people.”[21] The name Syrian was never used by Arabs to identify themselves with until the creation of the Syrian Arab Republic. Even then, they do not call themselves Syriani / Suryani (the name of the Christian “Syrians”) but Suri. [22]

After many centuries, it is evident that the Syriac appellation had not really changed. Badger in early nineteenth century noted that the oldest and the most important Chaldean community in Diyarbakir could only boast of the name ‘Sooraya’ and ‘Nestoraya’[23]. Even by the end of the nineteenth century Rassam concedes that, “the peasantry do certainly call themselves ‘Sooraya’ and ‘Msheehaya’...”[24]

It is also worth noting that the historically constant designation of the Assyrians by the Armenians, Turks and Persians is Asori / Asuri (Assyrian; an adjective meaning “belonging to Ashur”). Horatio Southgate wrote the following about the Assyrians of the Kharput region, “I began to make enquiries for the Syrians... I observed that the Armenians did not know them under the name which I used, Syriani; but called them ASSOURI, which struck me the more at the moment from its resemblance to our English name Assyrians, from whom they claim their origin, being sons, as they say, of Assour, (Asshur,)...”[25] and “Their common language in the district is Turkish, in which language it is that the Athour of the Syriac and Arabic is converted into Asour, and the Athouri of the Arabic, (Syriac, Othoroyo,) into Asouri, the common name of the Syrians.”[26]

Assyrians and the Aramaic Language

Dr. Brinkman states that in the 7th century BC, Aramaic had begun to replace Assyrian in Assyria and the king had to insist that letters from his officials be written in Assyrian and not Aramaic. He also theorises that the Aramaic language took over because of its simple alphabet as opposed to the 600-700 syllables of the Assyro-Babylonian language.[27] In fact it had attained such a high status in the Assyrian imperial period and was used so profusely by Assyrians that, as highly esteemed Assyriologist Dr. Simo Parpola relates, “The Greek historian Thucydides reports that during the Peloponnesian wars (ca. 410 BC) the Athenians intercepted a Persian who was carrying a message

from the Great King to Sparta. The man was taken prisoner, brought to Athens, and the letters he was carrying were translated “from the Assyrian language”, which of course was Aramaic...”[28]And so it becomes evident that, just as Aramaic was the Imperial Assyrian language, the very similar Syriac (or if one agrees with the Greek historians - Assyrian) also later became the ecclesiastical language of the Assyrian Eastern Churches.

Assyrian Continuity?

Anglican missionary, Rev. W. A. Wigram, in his book *The Assyrians and Their Neighbours*[29] (1929), writes, “The Assyrian stock, still resident in the provinces about the ruins of Nineveh, where Mosul, Arbela, and Kirkuk were already great cities, seem to have been left to its own customs in the same way.”[30]

Esteemed Assyriologist, H.W.F. Saggs, Professor Emeritus of Semitic Languages of the University College at Cardiff, tells us of the continuity of the Assyrian identity from the fall of the Assyrian Empire and into the Christian era, in his book, *The Might That Was Assyria*[31]. He states that,

“The destruction of the Assyrian Empire did not wipe out its population. They were predominantly peasant farmers, and since Assyria contains some of the best wheat land in the Near East, descendants of the Assyrian peasants would, as opportunity permitted, build new villages over the old cities and carried on with agricultural life, remembering traditions of the former cities. After seven or eight centuries and after various vicissitudes, these people became Christians. These Christians, and the Jewish communities scattered amongst them, not only kept alive the memory of their Assyrian predecessors but also combined them with traditions from the Bible. The Bible, indeed, came to be a powerful factor in keeping alive the memory of Assyria and particularly of Nineveh. Nineveh was at the center of one of the most fascinating of the Old Testament legends, the story of the prophet Jonah who attempted in vain to escape the God-given duty of preaching to the great pagan capital. On part of the ruins of Nineveh there was a sacred mound, and this - probably originally an Assyrian temple - Christians and Jews came to identify with the spot where Jonah preached. A church was built on the site. When the Muslims conquered Mesopotamia in the seventh century AD, they adopted the local traditions of the Christians and Jews amongst whom they lived, and Jonah became significant to Muslims no less than to Jews and Christians. A mosque replaced the church but retained - and retains to this day - the association with Jonah.”[32]

Dr. John A. Brinkman[33] states that, “For several centuries people lived in Assyria after the fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (614-610 BC) and followed the Assyrian religion and can be classified as Assyrians.”[34]When asked if there was racial continuity in Assyria after the empire Dr. Brinkman replied, “There is no reason to believe that there would be no racial or cultural continuity in Assyria since there is no evidence that the population of Assyria was removed.”[35]

The Historical Evidence

Dr. Brinkman makes mention of the fact that Assyrian cuneiform did not die out with the empire's destruction, four Assyrian texts written by Assyrians in the Assyrian dialect and script being found at a site called Dur-Katlimmu (Sheikh Hamed), on the Khabour River in Syria. These are "couched in Assyrian legal formulae" and date to the second and fifth years of Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon, i.e. from 603-600 BC, between nine and twelve years after the fall of Nineveh. So Assyrian cuneiform had survived the empire.[36] James Henry Breasted in his book; *The Conquest of Civilization*[37], mentions that, "... the remnants of the Assyrian army fled westward and with Egyptian support held together for a short time..."[38]. Professor Saggs also says that, even after the empire's fall, the Assyrians were "not yet finished"[39]. Those of the Assyrian army that were able to flee Nineveh escaped hundreds of miles westward to Harran, where Ashur-Uballit II of the Assyrian royal family was proclaimed king of Assyria.

Konstantin Petrovich Matveev in his book *The Assyrians and the Assyrian Question*[40] writes that, "It has been documented that Meneshe, an Assyrian prince, was able to escape towards the north during the fall of Nineveh and fortify in the mountains of Ashur." (Translated from Arabic by Fred Aprim[41]). A report by Reuters from 1987, states that, "The new evidence shows that rather than dispersing, surviving Assyrians formed small societies some distance away from their main cities." [42] The new evidence refers to Assyrian Tells (mounds) in Iraq dating to the third century BC, three centuries after the fall of their empire. Dr. Brinkman also states that in the Assyrian religious capital Assur, Assyrians tried to keep the religion alive by rebuilding two shrines and reusing inscriptions and decorations from the old temples.[43] Rev. W. A. Wigram in his book *The Assyrians and Their Neighbours* also states that, "At least they [the Assyrians] were there in days of Tiglath-Pileser I, the founder of the Assyrian Empire in the year 1000 BC, and they were there still in the year 400 BC, when Xenophon with his Greeks fought his way homeward through their mountains." [44]

In 400 BC, a Greek general named Xenophon, employed by the Persian king Cyrus son of Darius, wrote his chronicle[45] as he and his 10,000 strong army retreated through Assyria along the river Tigris. He always comments on the plentiful supplies that were available, arguing a considerable production of grain. He writes that Assur, which was now called Kinai, was a prosperous city and that his army bought cheese and wine from the local inhabitants. It seems, from his writings, that many of the buildings and houses had survived the destruction of the city in 614 BC. He also wrote of many surviving villages in Kalhu, which was now called Larissa, and of a village called Mespila near a large undefended fortification, which may be identified with today's Mosul.[46] By careful examination of the topography described by Xenophon, scholars have determined[47] that the fortification was the city of Nineveh, though under the eponymic name of Ninus. Mespila, on the other hand, as suggested by Hayim Tadmor[48] and Stephen A. Kaufman[49], is the Aramaic 'mashplah' as heard by Xenophon from the local population, meaning "the fallen one". The Assyrians living in Mosul have never forgotten that their city had a glorious past. As E.B. Soane wrote in 1892, "The Mosul people, especially the Christians are very proud of their city and the antiquity of its surroundings.

The Christians, regard themselves as “direct descendants of the great rulers of Assyria”[50]

Documents show that when Hurmizd Rassam was negotiating with the authorities to excavate one of the two tells at Nineveh, he was told that its legal name was “Ninua”. Though according to Xavier Koodapuzha, Mar Yuhannan Sulaqa, the first “Chaldean” Patriarch, was proclaimed Patriarch of “Mosul and Athour” on February 20th 1553 by Pope Julius III and Vatican documents originally refer to Sulaqa as the elected Patriarch of “the Assyrian Nation.”[51] Henry Burgess explains that this should not sound odd as, “In many Syriac manuscripts, Mosul is styled as Athour and it is not uncommon practice with ecclesiastical writers of the present day to use the same phraseology.”[52] Stephanie Dalley, though, writes that, “In Syriac Church literature ‘Athour’ is the name of Mosul, on the bank of the Tigris opposite Nineveh; but it also designates a metropolitan see, including Mosul, Nineveh and other towns.”[53]

Dr. Brinkman also makes mention that the Romans captured Nineveh, which they called Ninus, in 115 BC and again in 200 AD when they set up the province, which they named Assyria. The temple of Nabu at Nineveh was also repaired in the first century AD. Assyrian, Aramaic, and Greek inscriptions have been found in Nineveh, dating to this time. Kalhu was also resettled and the temples rebuilt. Assur became a great and prosperous city again and the temple of Assur restored. The inhabitants, though, had now lost the idea of a ziggurat as a religious building and began to use it solely as a watchtower. All the gods of the Assyrian pantheon were still being worshipped 800 years after the fall of the Assyrian empire.[54] This is backed up by esteemed archaeologist and historian Georges Roux in his book *Ancient Iraq*. [55]

Between the second century BC and third century AD, authors Patricia Crone and Michael Cook state in their book *Hagarism*[56] that,

“Assyria... had been left virtually alone by the Achaemenids and Seleucids; condemned to oblivion by the outside world, it could recollect its own glorious past in a certain tranquillity. Consequently when the region came back into the focus of history under the Parthians, it was with an Assyrian, not a Persian let alone Greek, self-identification: the temple of Ashur was restored, the city was rebuilt, and an Assyrian successor state returned in the shape of the client kingdom of Adiabene.”[57]

Georges Roux, the author of *Ancient Iraq*[58], mentions that after the introduction of Christianity into Assyria, “We know that some of the ancient temples were restored, that Ashur was worshipped in his home town, that a cult was rendered to Nabu in Borsippa until, perhaps, the fourth century AD.”

Roux further states that, “After the fall of Assyria, however, its actual name was gradually transferred to Syria. Thus, in the Babylonian version of Darius I inscriptions, Susa f, Eber-nari (“across-the-river,” i.e. Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia) corresponds to the Persian and Elamite Athura (Assyria). Besides, in the Behistun inscription, Izalla, the

region of Syria renowned for its wine, is assigned to Athura.” (Izalla or Izla / Izlo is the southern part of the Tur-‘Abdin region in which is the famous monastery of St. Eugenius)

Assyrians and Syriac Christianity

Aziz Suryal Atiya, a historian and professor of history, discusses the origin of Syriac / Assyrian Christianity under the heading of “Age of Legend” thus, “Assyrian or Syriac traditions link the establishment of Syrian [the Greek for Assyrian] Christianity with the earliest Apostolic age. Some even assert that the evangelization of Edessa occurred within the lifetime of Jesus Christ himself. Accordingly, the Nestorians promoted three legends in support of that contention while relating them to the three Magi and their visit to the infant Jesus, the story of King Abgar of Edessa, and the Acts of St. Thomas the Apostle... Whatever the historicity of those legends may be, the moral is that the roots of Assyrian Christianity are deep in antiquity. Though it may be hard to accept the hypothesis of Abgar V’s conversion around the middle of the first century AD, Abgar VIII (176-213) is known to have been a Christian from the testimony of Sextus Julius Africanus, who visited his court.”[59]

We read in ‘Edessa the Blessed City’[60] by J.B. Segal that Abgar the black of the first century AD wrote a letter to Narsai King of Assyria. Historical evidence indicates that Narsai King of Adiabene also known as King of Assyria was a contemporary of the Abgar the Great (177-204 AD). Reportedly the Parthians drowned Narsai in the Great Zab for his pro-Roman sympathies.[61]

A reference from the Encyclopedia Britannica CD 98 takes one back to the fourth century AD of Assyrian Christianity. “Aphraates became a convert to Christianity during the reign of the anti-Christian Persian king Shapur II (309-379), after which he led a monastic life, possibly at the monastery of St. Matthew near Mosul, Iraq... insulated from the intellectual currents traversing the Greco-Roman ecclesiastical world, the “Homilies” manifest a teaching indigenous to early Assyrian Judeo-Christianity.”

The history of the Assyrian Churches has no shortage of names of martyrs who affixed Assyrian to their names from the early days of Christianity. We read of Tatian the Assyrian, a philosopher who was born in AD 130, and Mar Behnam and his sister Sarah, the children of Sennacherib, king of Ashur, who were martyred in AD 352.[62]

Rev. Aubrey R. Vine in his book The Nestorian Churches[63] mentions that the Church of the East had Metropolitan Sees at Nisibis and Adiabene (Arbil) and Bishoprics at Nineveh and Singara, all formerly Assyrian imperial cities.[64]

Philip Hitti, Professor of Semitic literature at Princeton University, in his book History of Syria[65], writes that, “Before the rise of Islam the Syrian (Suryani) Christian Church had split into several communities. There was first the East Syrian Church or the Church of the East. This communion, established in the late second century, claims uninterrupted descent in its teachings, liturgy, consecration and tradition from the time the Edessene

King Abgar allegedly wrote to Christ asking him to relieve him of an incurable disease and Christ promised to send him one of his disciples after his ascension. This is the church erroneously called Nestorian, after the Cilician Nestorius, whom it antedates by about two and a half centuries...”[66] Hitti continues later, “The East Syrian Church was represented at the beginning of the First World War by... members domiciled around Urmiah, al-Mawsil (Mosul) and central Kurdistan. Those who survived have since drifted into Iraq and Syria. As an ethnic group they would rather be called Assyrians, an appellation that does not seem inappropriate when the physical features of many of them are compared with the Assyrian type as portrayed on the monuments.”[67]

Conclusion

The Assyrian nation, apart from undergoing an ongoing genocide, has also suffered a cultural genocide that has attacked the Assyrian identity and questioned its origins and unity as a people. Assyrians have come to be called Nestorians, Chaldeans, Jacobites, Syriacs, Syrians, Maronites and Melkites through religious influences and by the governments that now rule over portions of what is their ancestral homeland. As esteemed social anthropologist Dr. Arian Ishaya of UCLA in her paper *Intellectual Domination and the Assyrians*[68] states, there are different ways of dominating a people, those most direct being to take hold of their land and resources, deny them statehood, and force their manpower to do the labour work or fight the battles of the conqueror. But she also mentions that domination may also come in a more indirect, abstract form which is intellectual, this form being the most dangerous as it penetrates the victim's inner feelings and thoughts. Thus, she determines, the victim remains unaware and willingly subjugates itself to intellectual domination.[69]

Dr. Ishaya goes on to point out that, last century the Assyrians fell victim to the wave of western Orientalism that swept the world, which attacked the culture of the “Easterners” and was an era when numerous diplomats and missionary movements attempted to “civilise” them. In the twentieth century, though, social scientists and academics replaced the missionaries or the diplomats of the previous century as the “experts” on the Assyrians. But although the experts have changed, the orientalist bias is still there, and reappears in a new guise. If one examines recent manuscripts and publications on the Assyrians one will notice that it has become almost fashionable for most dissertations, books, or articles to either directly or indirectly start with the question: “Are contemporary Assyrians really Assyrian?” Some claims from certain groups thus question the linkage of today's Assyrians to those of antiquity. We hear of claims hinting that the Assyrians of antiquity simply disappeared and vanished from the face of the earth after the fall of their last capital in 612 BC, while, others imply that today's Assyrians are different peoples, and it just happened that they coincidentally acquired that name some 150 years ago. One good example may be found in *The Church of the East and the Church of England*[70] by J.F. Coakley. This question is then followed by a painstaking comparison of the racial and cultural traits of the Assyrians of today with the remnants of archaeological relics to establish if the historical continuity between the two exists or not!

In Dr. Ishaya's opinion, "What these scholars and some of their readers do not seem to realize is that to question the legitimacy of the name of today's Assyrians is not a "scientific" act; it is a political one, because this is the type of question that the colonial powers raise to deny the territorial and cultural rights of several dominated peoples." [71]

Dr. Ishaya then continues to mention the Kurds in Turkey, the Africans in South Africa and the Assyrians in Iraq, within the borders of which, the heartland of ancient Assyria lies. All of these peoples face the same problem. Their very name is denied so as to deny their national legitimacy. For the Turkish government the Kurds are "Mountain Turks", and for the Afrikaners, the former white ruling minority of South Africa, the native Africans were just diverse Bantu tribes, and not a single people. In the same way the Assyrians are merely "Syriac-speaking Christians" from the perspective of the Arab Ba'athist government of Iraq, which also calls them Arab or Kurdish Christians. What Dr. Ishaya does not address is that the Turkish government also denies its Assyrian population the right to a national identity, calling them "Semite-Turks" or "Turco-Semites" or even, derogatorily, "Armenians". [72]

Dr. Ishaya goes on to state that it is evident, in view of these facts, that, "... scholars, by posing the very question of identity, are providing the ruling powers with a weapon to use against their minorities. What other purpose can an utterly unscientific question serve? Why is the question unscientific? Because there has been a tremendous amount of cultural and racial admixture among human societies through the centuries. Cultural and racial continuity is impossible to be established for ANY national group.

Moreover, during the 20th century old nations have been dismantled and new ones created without any regard to cultural and historical realities - as a glance on the map of Europe readily shows. In Europe after World War I people who shared the same language and culture were torn apart to constitute different "nations" and people with diverse linguistic and racial characteristics forcefully sandwiched together to form one nation. And since the arrangement suited the superpowers, no questions are asked as to the legitimacy of these nations on cultural or historical grounds and yet the Assyrians are on the millstone for those very reasons!" [73]

The Assyrians call themselves and other people of Syriac-speaking heritage Assyrians for a very simple and convincing reason: they are the age-old inhabitants of ancient Assyria. It is their homeland. They have churches there that date as far back as third and fourth century AD and still others, such as St. Mary at Kharput [74] and St. Mary at Urmia [75], that are of apostolic foundation. That is sufficient and says it all. There is no need to engage in the inconclusive argument of racial and cultural purity. When any nation says that it is what it is, it is that because its forefathers inhabited that region since time immemorial. The Assyrians say they are Assyrians because their forefathers inhabited Assyria and the French say that France is their homeland because they have lived there for many centuries. One claim is as valid as the other. What makes the French claim more respectable and that of the Assyrians questionable isn't science. It is

politics pure and simple. Thus, Dr. Ishaya concludes, “ ... the question of whether the contemporary Assyrians are Assyrians, should never be asked. When a scholar makes that a topic of research, he is playing POLITICAL GAME in the guise of science. There is no excuse for the academics to remain naive any longer. The scholars have no choice but to decide what they want to do with their profession: put it in the service of the people or use it to promote the interest of the ruling powers. Whatever choice they make, they can be sure that they can no longer fool the people.”[76]

Thank you!

[1] Korbani, Agnes G. (1995), *The Political Dictionary of the Modern Middle East*, Lanham, Md.: University Press of America

[2] “But if it be maintained, that the modern Nestorians are descendants of the ancient Chaldeans, and may therefore justly lay claim to the title, no valid objection can be urged against the assumption; but in this national acceptance of the term, the Nestorian proselytes to Rome, the Jacobites, Sabeans, Yezedeeds, and many of the Coords of this district, may with equal right take to themselves the appellation, there being as much proof to establish their descent from the Chaldeans of old, or rather the Assyrians, as there is in the case of the Nestorians.” p. 179

Badger, G.P. (1987), *The Nestorians and their rituals : with the narrative of a mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842-1844, and of a late visit to those countries in 1850 : also, researches into the present condition of the Syrian Jacobites, Papal Syrians, and Chaldeans, and an inquiry into the religious tenets of the Yezedeeds*

London : Darf Publishers

[3] The fact that Assyrians inhabit or once inhabited these areas is well attested by the varied accounts of travellers such as Austen Henry Layard, George Percy Badger, E.B. Soane, Justin Perkins, the Wigrams,

Lord Warkworth, Lady Bishop, F.N. Heazell, Asahel Grant, W.H. Browne and countless others.

[4] “[the Nestorians and Chaldeans] call themselves Sooraye (Syrians), and their language Soorith (Syriac).”Op. cit. no. 2, p. 178

[5] Figure 1.1, p.4 of Demovic, M. & Baker, C. (1999), *New Kingdom Egypt South* Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999

[6] As demonstrated in “The Fluidity of Language” table, p. 185 of Rohl, D. (1998), *Legend: the Genesis of Civilisation*

London: Random House

[7] Quoting Mar Toma Oddo on p. 69 of Dr. Pera Sarmas (1965), *Who Are We? Assyrian Youth Cultural Society Press: Tehran, Iran*

[8] *Ibid.*, p.69

[9] An extensive study of this particular dialect has been published by esteemed scholar of Aramaic, Otto Jastrow (1994), *Der neuaramäische Dialekt von Mlahsô*

Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz

[10] This explanation is also advocated by Dr. Pera Sarmas op. cit. no. 7, pp. 68-70

[11] Charles H. Swift Distinguished Service Professor of Mesopotamian History in the Oriental Institute and in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilisations at the University of Chicago, Editor of

the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary and Curator of the Oriental Institute's Cuneiform Tablet Collection.

[12] Dr. Brinkman in a lecture entitled *Assyrians After the Empire*, held at the Mesopotamian Museum in Chicago on January 17, 1999, hosted by the Assyrian Academic Society in conjunction with the

museum. This is mentioned at <http://aas.net/brinkman.htm>

[13] Professor Richard N. Frye of Harvard University, USA *Ethnic Name Designations: the Case of the Assyrians*

The Assyrian Australian Academic Journal, Vol. 4 (July 1999)

Sydney: TAAAS

p. 7

[14] *Ibid.*, 7-8

[15] *The Encyclopedia Americana*, International ed. (c1986) Danbury, Conn.: Grolier

[16] Herodotus, translation by Aubrey de Sélincourt (1972), *Herodotus: The Histories* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books

[17] Herodotus, trans. Harry Carter (1958), *The History of Herodotus* New York: The Heritage Press

[18] P. 195 (16. I. 2-3) of Strabo, translated by Horace Jones (1917), The Geography of Strabo London : W. Heinemann ; New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons

[19] His Holiness Patriarch Mor Michael the Great (1899), The Book of the Histories Paris

[20] Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 32

[21] Ibid, p. 748

[22] Assad Sauma-Assad, The Origin of the Word Suryoyo-Syrian The Harp, Vol. VI No. 3 (December 1993)

Kottayam, India: SEERI

p. 171-172

[23] Op. Cit. no. 2, p. 180

[24] Rassam, H. (1897), Asshur and the Land of Nimrod London

[25] Southgate, H. (1844) Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian [Jacobite] Church of Mesopotamia : With Statements and Reflections Upon the Present State of Christianity in Turkey and the

Character and Prospects of the Eastern Churches

New York: D. Appleton

p. 80

[26] Ibid, p. 87

[27] Op. Cit. no. 12

[28] In Assyrians After Assyria by Dr. Simo Parpola. Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies, Vol. XIII No. 2, 1999

Published at Chicago, USA

[29] Rev. W.A. Wigram (1929), The Assyrians and Their Neighbours London

[30] Ibid, p. 26

[31] H.W.F. Saggs (1984), The Might That Was Assyria London: Sidgwick & Jackson

[32] Ibid, p. 290

[33] Op. cit. no.12

[34] Ibid

[35] Ibid

[36] Ibid; also Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project / Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995.

[37] Breasted, H.J. (1954), The Conquest of Civilization New York, Harper & Row, 1954

[38] Ibid, p.175

[39] Op. cit. no. 29, p. 120

[40] Qustantin Bitrufij Matfif Barmti (1989), al-Ashuriyun wa-al-mas'alah al-Ashuriyah fi al-`asr alhadith

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[42] Printed in Nabu Magazine, Vol. 3, Issue 1 (1997)

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[44] Op. cit. no. 27, p. 7

[45] The Persian Expedition by Xenophon text, with introduction and notes by Jeremy Antrich and Stephen Usher

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[70] J.F. Coakley (1992), *The Church of the East and the Church of England : a History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission*

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[73] *Op. cit.* no. 66

[74] Horatio Southgate confirms this when he writes that, "The priest informed me that the Church was built originally by the Apostle Adi, or Thaddeus..." *op. cit.* no. 23, p. 86

[75] Arthur John Maclean and William Henry Browne write, "It is said to have been built by the Magi, and to contain the tomb of one of them." In *The Catholicos of the East and his People: being the impressions*

of five years' work in the "Archbishop of Caterbury's Assyrian mission," an account of the

religious and secular life and opinions of the Eastern Syrian Christians of Kurdistan and Northern

Persia (known also as Nestorians) , London : S.P.C.K. ; New York : E. & J.B. Young.
This point is also

supported by Dr. Abraham Yohannan (1916) in The Death of a Nation, or, The Ever Persecuted

Nestorians or Assyrian Christians, New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, where he openly states this fact

and mentions it in the caption under the picture of the church.

[76] Op. cit. no. 66

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<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~atlas/europe/interactive/map34.html>

119 captures

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Return to the Fact Menu

Iraq - Statistics

Statistics for Iraq

The area of Iraq (168,727 sq. miles) is only a little larger than the state of California (155,973 sq. miles).

The population of Iraq (24,001,816) is significantly less than the population of California (33,145,121) but much of the land in Iraq is left uncultivated (87.33% or 147,350 sq. miles) primarily because of a lack of rain. The rain, which falls between November and May, measures only 4 to 10 inches per year on the central plain. Rainfall does increase up to 40 inches per year in the Zagros Mountains, especially in the northeastern area of the country.

Many of the statistics on the linked pages are expressed in metric units. Click here for a good, easy-to-use conversion site to convert metric units of measurement into American units or vice versa.

For Iraq statistics from the 2002 World Fact Book, click here.

For Iraq statistics from Global Security, click here.

1

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mile to kilometer Time

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centimeter to inch Volume

cubic/cubed, liquids

liters in a gallon

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Fractions to decimals

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2005 2006 2007

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This page was last updated on 16 May, 2006

[Map of Iraq](#)

Legend: DefinitionDefinition Field ListingField Listing Rank OrderRank Order

Background:

Definition Field Listing

Formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq was occupied by Britain during the course of World War I; in 1920, it was declared a League of Nations mandate under UK administration. In stages over the next dozen years, Iraq attained its independence as a kingdom in 1932. A "republic" was proclaimed in 1958, but in actuality a series of military strongmen ruled the country, the latest was SADDAM Husayn. Territorial disputes with Iran led to an inconclusive and costly eight-year war (1980-88). In August 1990, Iraq seized Kuwait, but was expelled by US-led, UN coalition forces during the Gulf War of January-February 1991. Following Kuwait's liberation, the UN Security Council (UNSC) required Iraq to scrap all weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles and to allow UN verification inspections. Continued Iraqi noncompliance with UNSC resolutions over a period of 12 years led to the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and the ouster of the SADDAM Husayn regime. Coalition forces remain in Iraq, helping to restore degraded infrastructure and facilitating the establishment of a freely elected government, while simultaneously dealing with a robust insurgency. The Coalition Provisional Authority, which temporarily administered Iraq after the invasion, transferred full governmental authority on 28 June 2004, to the Iraqi Interim Government (IG), which governed under the Transitional Administrative Law for Iraq (TAL). Under the TAL, elections for a 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA) were held in Iraq on 30 January 2005. Following these elections, the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) assumed office. The TNA was charged with drafting Iraq's permanent constitution, which was approved in a 15 October 2005 constitutional referendum. An election under the constitution for a 275-member Council of Representatives (CoR) was held on 15 December 2005. After an official certified ballot count is released, an Iraqi Government is expected to be formed by late spring or early summer 2006.

Location:

Definition Field Listing

Middle East, bordering the Persian Gulf, between Iran and Kuwait

Geographic coordinates:

Definition Field Listing

33 00 N, 44 00 E

Map references:

Definition Field Listing

Middle East

Area:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

total: 437,072 sq km

land: 432,162 sq km

water: 4,910 sq km

Area - comparative:

Definition Field Listing

slightly more than twice the size of Idaho

Land boundaries:

Definition Field Listing

total: 3,650 km

border countries: Iran 1,458 km, Jordan 181 km, Kuwait 240 km, Saudi Arabia 814 km, Syria 605 km, Turkey 352 km

Coastline:

Definition Field Listing

58 km

Maritime claims:

Definition Field Listing

territorial sea: 12 nm

continental shelf: not specified

Climate:

Definition Field Listing

mostly desert; mild to cool winters with dry, hot, cloudless summers; northern mountainous regions along Iranian and Turkish borders experience cold winters with occasionally heavy snows that melt in early spring, sometimes causing extensive flooding in central and southern Iraq

Terrain:

Definition Field Listing

mostly broad plains; reedy marshes along Iranian border in south with large flooded areas; mountains along borders with Iran and Turkey

Elevation extremes:

Definition Field Listing

lowest point: Persian Gulf 0 m

highest point: unnamed peak; 3,611 m; note - this peak is not Gundah Zhur 3,607 m or Kuh-e Hajji-Ebrahim 3,595 m

Natural resources:

Definition Field Listing

petroleum, natural gas, phosphates, sulfur

Land use:

Definition Field Listing

arable land: 13.12%

permanent crops: 0.61%

other: 86.27% (2005)

Irrigated land:

Definition Field Listing

35,250 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards:

Definition Field Listing

dust storms, sandstorms, floods

Environment - current issues:

Definition Field Listing

government water control projects have drained most of the inhabited marsh areas east of An Nasiriyah by drying up or diverting the feeder streams and rivers; a once sizable

population of Marsh Arabs, who inhabited these areas for thousands of years, has been displaced; furthermore, the destruction of the natural habitat poses serious threats to the area's wildlife populations; inadequate supplies of potable water; development of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers system contingent upon agreements with upstream riparian Turkey; air and water pollution; soil degradation (salination) and erosion; desertification

Environment - international agreements:

Definition Field Listing

party to: Law of the Sea

signed, but not ratified: Environmental Modification

Geography - note:

Definition Field Listing

strategic location on Shatt al Arab waterway and at the head of the Persian Gulf

People Iraq Top of Page

Population:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

26,783,383 (July 2006 est.)

Age structure:

Definition Field Listing

0-14 years: 39.7% (male 5,398,645/female 5,231,760)

15-64 years: 57.3% (male 7,776,257/female 7,576,726)

65 years and over: 3% (male 376,700/female 423,295) (2006 est.)

Median age:

Definition Field Listing

total: 19.7 years

male: 19.6 years

female: 19.8 years (2006 est.)

Population growth rate:

Definition Field Listing

2.66% (2006 est.)

Birth rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

31.98 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Death rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

5.37 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Net migration rate:

Definition Field Listing

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Sex ratio:

Definition Field Listing

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.89 male(s)/female

total population: 1.02 male(s)/female (2006 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

total: 48.64 deaths/1,000 live births

male: 54.39 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 42.61 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

total population: 69.01 years

male: 67.76 years

female: 70.31 years (2006 est.)

Total fertility rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

4.18 children born/woman (2006 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

less than 0.1% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

less than 500 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

NA

Nationality:

Definition Field Listing

noun: Iraqi(s)

adjective: Iraqi

Ethnic groups:

Definition Field Listing

Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian or other 5%

Religions:

Definition Field Listing

Muslim 97% (Shi'a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian or other 3%

Languages:

Definition Field Listing

Arabic, Kurdish (official in Kurdish regions), Assyrian, Armenian

Literacy:

Definition Field Listing

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 40.4%

male: 55.9%

female: 24.4% (2003 est.)

Government Iraq [Top of Page](#)

Country name:

Definition Field Listing

conventional long form: Republic of Iraq

conventional short form: Iraq

local long form: Al Jumhuriyah al Iraqiyah

local short form: Al Iraq

Government type:

Definition Field Listing

transitional democracy

Capital:

Definition Field Listing

Baghdad

Administrative divisions:

Definition Field Listing

18 governorates (muhafazat, singular - muhafazah); Al Anbar, Al Basrah, Al Muthanna, Al Qadisiyah, An Najaf, Arbil, As Sulaymaniyah, At Ta'mim, Babil, Baghdad, Dahuk, Dhi Qar, Diyala, Karbala', Maysan, Ninawa, Salah ad Din, Wasit

Independence:

Definition Field Listing

3 October 1932 (from League of Nations mandate under British administration); note - on 28 June 2004 the Coalition Provisional Authority transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government

National holiday:

Definition Field Listing

Revolution Day, 17 July (1968); note - this holiday was celebrated under the SADDAM Husayn regime but the Iraqi Interim Government has yet to declare a new national holiday

Constitution:

Definition Field Listing

ratified on 15 October 2005

Legal system:

Definition Field Listing

based on European civil and Islamic law under the framework outlined in the Iraqi Constitution

Suffrage:

Definition Field Listing

formerly 18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

Definition Field Listing

chief of state: Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) President Jalal TALABANI (since 6 April 2005); Deputy Presidents Adil Abd AL-MAHDI and Tariq al-HASHIMI (since 22 April 2006); note - the President and Deputy Presidents comprise the Presidency Council)

head of government: Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) Prime Minister Ibrahim al-JAFARI (since April 2005); Deputy Prime Ministers Rowsch SHAWAYS, Ahmad CHALABI, and Abid MUTLAQ Hamud al-Jabburi (since May 2005)

cabinet: 32 ministers appointed by the Presidency Council, plus Prime Minister Ibrahim al-JAFARI, Deputy Prime Ministers Rowsch SHAWAYS, Ahmad CHALABI, and Abid al-

Mutlaq al-JABBURI

elections: held 15 December 2005 to elect a 275-member Council of Representatives
Legislative branch:

Definition Field Listing

unicameral Council of Representatives or Mejlis Watani (consisting of 275 members elected by a closed-list, proportional-representation system)

elections: held 15 December 2005 to elect a 275-member Council of Representatives that will finalize a permanent constitution

election results: Council of Representatives - percent of vote by party - NA; number of seats by party - NA

Judicial branch:

Definition Field Listing

Supreme Court appointed by the Prime Minister, confirmed by the Presidency Council

Political parties and leaders:

Definition Field Listing

Al-Sadr Movement [Muqtada Al-SADR]; Assyrian Democratic Movement [Yunadim KANNA]; Conference of Iraqi People [Adnan al-DULAYMI]; Constitutional Monarchy Movement or CMM [Sharif Ali Bin al-HUSAYN]; Da'wa Party [Ibrahim al-JA'FARI]; Independent Iraqi Alliance or IIA [Falah al-NAQIB]; Iraqi Communist Party [Hamid al-MUSA]; Iraqi Hizballah [Karim Mahud al-MUHAMMADAWI]; Iraqi Independent Democrats or IID [Adnan PACHACHI, Mahdi al-HAFIZ]; Iraqi Islamic Party or IIP [Muhsin Abd al-HAMID, Hajim al-HASSANI]; Iraqi National Accord or INA [Ayad ALLAWI]; Iraqi National Congress or INC [Ahmad CHALABI]; Iraqi National Council for Dialogue or INCD [Khalaf Ulayan al-Khalifawi al-DULAYMI]; Iraqi National Unity Movement or INUM [Ahmad al-KUBAYSI, chairman]; Islamic Action Organization or IAO [Ayatollah Muhammad al-MUDARRISI]; Jama'at al Fadilah or JAF [Ayatollah Muhammad Ali al-YAQUBI]; Kurdistan Democratic Party or KDP [Masud BARZANI]; Muslim Ulama Council or MUC [Harith Sulayman al-DARI, secretary general]; National Iraqi Front [Salih al-MUTLAQ]; National Reconciliation and Liberation Party [Mishan al-JABBURI]; Patriotic Union of Kurdistan or PUK [Jalal TALABANI]; Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq or SCIRI [Abd al-Aziz al-HAKIM]

note: the Kurdistan Alliance, Iraqi National List, Iraqi Consensus Front, Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, and United Iraqi Alliance were only electoral slates consisting of the representatives from the various Iraqi political parties

Political pressure groups and leaders:

Definition Field Listing

an insurgency against the Iraqi Transitional Government and Coalition forces is primarily concentrated in Baghdad and in areas west and north of the capital; the diverse, multigroup insurgency is led principally by Sunni Arabs whose only common denominator is a shared desire to oust the Coalition and end US influence in Iraq

International organization participation:

Definition Field Listing

ABEDA, AFESD, AMF, CAEU, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO, ITU, LAS, NAM, OAPC, OIC, OPEC, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTOO,

WTO (observer)

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Definition Field Listing

chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Said Shehab AHMED

chancery: 1801 P Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

telephone: [1] (202) 483-7500

FAX: [1] (202) 462-5066

Diplomatic representation from the US:

Definition Field Listing

chief of mission: Ambassador Zalmay KHALILZAD; Deputy Chief of Mission David M. SATTERFIELD

embassy: Baghdad

mailing address: APO AE 09316

telephone: 00-1-240-553-0584 ext. 5340 OR 5635; note - Consular Section

FAX: NA

Flag description:

Definition Field Listing

three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black with three green five-pointed stars in a horizontal line centered in the white band; the phrase ALLAHU AKBAR (God is Great) in green Arabic script - Allahu to the right of the middle star and Akbar to the left of the middle star - was added in January 1991 during the Persian Gulf crisis; similar to the flag of Syria, which has two stars but no script, Yemen, which has a plain white band, and that of Egypt which has a gold Eagle of Saladin centered in the white band; design is based upon the Arab Liberation colors

Economy Iraq Top of Page

Economy - overview:

Definition Field Listing

Iraq's economy is dominated by the oil sector, which has traditionally provided about 95% of foreign exchange earnings. Iraq's seizure of Kuwait in August 1990, subsequent international economic sanctions, and damage from military action by an international coalition beginning in January 1991 drastically reduced economic activity. Although government policies supporting large military and internal security forces and allocating resources to key supporters of the regime hurt the economy, implementation of the UN's oil-for-food program, which began in December 1996, helped improve conditions for the average Iraqi citizen. Iraq was allowed to export limited amounts of oil in exchange for food, medicine, and some infrastructure spare parts. In December 1999, the UN Security Council authorized Iraq to export under the program as much oil as required to meet humanitarian needs. Per capita food imports increased significantly, while medical supplies and health care services steadily improved. Per capita output and living standards were still well below the pre-1991 level, but any estimates have a wide range of error. The military victory of the US-led coalition in March-April 2003 resulted in the shutdown of much of the central economic administrative structure. Although a comparatively small amount of capital plant was damaged during the hostilities, looting, insurgent attacks, and sabotage have undermined efforts to rebuild the economy. Attacks on key economic facilities - especially oil pipelines and infrastructure - have

prevented Iraq from reaching projected export volumes, but total government revenues have been higher than anticipated due to high oil prices. Despite political uncertainty, Iraq has established the institutions needed to implement economic policy, has successfully concluded a three-stage debt reduction agreement with the Paris Club, and is working toward a Standby Arrangement with the IMF. The Standby Arrangement would clear the way for continued debt relief from the Paris Club.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

\$94.1 billion (2005 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate):

Definition Field Listing

\$46.5 billion (2005 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

-3% (2005 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

\$3,400 (2005 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

Definition Field Listing

agriculture: 7.3%

industry: 66.6%

services: 26.1% (2004 est.)

Labor force:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

7.4 million (2004 est.)

Labor force - by occupation:

Definition Field Listing

agriculture: NA%

industry: NA%

services: NA%

Unemployment rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

25% to 30% (2005 est.)

Population below poverty line:

Definition Field Listing

NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

Definition Field Listing

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

40% (2005 est.)

Budget:

Definition Field Listing

revenues: \$19.3 billion

expenditures: \$24 billion; including capital expenditures of \$5 billion (2005 budget)

Agriculture - products:

Definition Field Listing

wheat, barley, rice, vegetables, dates, cotton; cattle, sheep, poultry

Industries:

Definition Field Listing

petroleum, chemicals, textiles, leather, construction materials, food processing, fertilizer, metal fabrication/processing

Industrial production growth rate:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

NA%

Electricity - production:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

31.7 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - consumption:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

33.3 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - exports:

Definition Field Listing

0 kWh (2005)

Electricity - imports:

Definition Field Listing

2.02 billion kWh (2005)

Oil - production:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

2.093 million bbl/day; note - prewar production (in 2002) was 2.03 million bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - consumption:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

351,500 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - exports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

1.42 million bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - imports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

NA bbl/day

Oil - proved reserves:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

112.5 billion bbl (2005 est.)

Natural gas - production:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

1.5 billion cu m (2003 est.)

Natural gas - consumption:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
1.5 billion cu m (2003 est.)

Natural gas - exports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
0 cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - imports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
0 cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
3.115 trillion cu m (2005)

Current account balance:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
-\$9.447 billion (2004 est.)

Exports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
\$17.78 billion f.o.b. (2004)

Exports - commodities:

Definition Field Listing
crude oil (83.9%), crude materials excluding fuels (8.0%), food and live animals (5.0%)

Exports - partners:

Definition Field Listing
US 51.9%, Spain 7.3%, Japan 6.6%, Italy 5.7%, Canada 5.2% (2004)

Imports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
\$19.57 billion f.o.b. (2004)

Imports - commodities:

Definition Field Listing
food, medicine, manufactures

Imports - partners:

Definition Field Listing
Syria 23%, Turkey 19.5%, US 9.2%, Jordan 6.7%, Germany 4.9% (2004)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
\$8.4 billion (2005 est.)

Debt - external:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order
\$82.1 billion (2005 est.)

Economic aid - recipient:

Definition Field Listing
more than \$33 billion in foreign aid pledged for 2004-07 (2004)

Currency (code):

Definition Field Listing
New Iraqi dinar (NID) as of 22 January 2004

Exchange rates:

Definition Field Listing

New Iraqi dinars per US dollar - 1,475 (2005), 1,890 (second half, 2003), 0.3109 (2001)

Fiscal year:

Definition Field Listing

calendar year

Communications

Iraq

Top of Page

Telephones - main lines in use:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

1,034,200 (2004)

Telephones - mobile cellular:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

574,000 (2004)

Telephone system:

Definition Field Listing

general assessment: the 2003 war severely disrupted telecommunications throughout

Iraq including international connections; USAID is overseeing the repair of switching

capability and the construction of mobile and satellite communication facilities

domestic: repairs to switches and lines destroyed during the 2003 war continue, but

sabotage remains a problem; additional switching capacity is improving access; cellular

service is available and centered on three regional GSM networks, improving country-

wide connectivity

international: country code - 964; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Atlantic Ocean

and 1 Indian Ocean), 1 Intersputnik (Atlantic Ocean region), and 1 Arabsat (inoperative);

coaxial cable and microwave radio relay to Jordan, Kuwait, Syria, and Turkey; despite a

new satellite gateway, international calls outside of Baghdad remain problematic

Radio broadcast stations:

Definition Field Listing

after 17 months of unregulated media growth, there are approximately 80 radio stations

on the air inside Iraq (2004)

Television broadcast stations:

Definition Field Listing

21 (2004)

Internet country code:

Definition Field Listing

.iq

Internet hosts:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

4 (2005)

Internet users:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

36,000 (2005)

Transportation

Iraq

Top of Page

Airports:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

111 (2005)

Airports - with paved runways:

Definition Field Listing

total: 78

over 3,047 m: 20

2,438 to 3,047 m: 37

1,524 to 2,437 m: 5

914 to 1,523 m: 7

under 914 m: 9 (2005)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

Definition Field Listing

total: 33

over 3,047 m: 2

2,438 to 3,047 m: 4

1,524 to 2,437 m: 5

914 to 1,523 m: 12

under 914 m: 10 (2005)

Heliports:

Definition Field Listing

8 (2005)

Pipelines:

Definition Field Listing

gas 1,739 km; oil 5,418 km; refined products 1,343 km (2004)

Railways:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

total: 2,200 km

standard gauge: 2,200 km 1.435-m gauge (2004)

Roadways:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

total: 45,550 km

paved: 38,399 km

unpaved: 7,151 km (1999)

Waterways:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

5,279 km

note: Euphrates River (2,815 km), Tigris River (1,899 km), and Third River (565 km) are principal waterways (2004)

Merchant marine:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

total: 13 ships (1000 GRT or over) 67,796 GRT/101,317 DWT

by type: cargo 11, petroleum tanker 2 (2005)

Ports and terminals:

Definition Field Listing

Al Basrah, Khawr az Zubayr, Umm Qasr

Military

Iraq

Top of Page

Military branches:

Definition Field Listing

Iraqi Armed Forces: Iraqi Regular Army (includes Iraqi Special Operations Force, Iraqi Intervention Force), Iraqi Navy (former Iraqi Coastal Defense Force), Iraqi Air Force (former Iraqi Army Air Corps) (2005)

Military service age and obligation:

Definition Field Listing

18 years of age; the Iraqi Interim Government is creating a new professional Iraqi military force of men aged 18 to 40 to defend Iraq from external threats and the current insurgency (2004)

Manpower available for military service:

Definition Field Listing

males age 18-49: 5,870,640

females age 18-49: 5,642,073 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

Definition Field Listing

males age 18-49: 4,930,074

females age 18-49: 4,771,105 (2005 est.)

Manpower reaching military service age annually:

Definition Field Listing

males age 18-49: 198,518

females age 18-49: 289,879 (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

\$1.34 billion (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:

Definition Field Listing Rank Order

NA

Transnational Issues

Iraq

Top of Page

Disputes - international:

Definition Field Listing

coalition forces assist Iraqis in monitoring boundary security; Iraq's lack of a maritime boundary with Iran prompts jurisdiction disputes beyond the mouth of the Shatt al Arab in the Persian Gulf; Turkey has expressed concern over the status of Kurds in Iraq

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

Definition Field Listing

refugees (country of origin): 22,711 (Palestinian Territories)

IDPs: 1 million (ongoing US-led war and Kurds' subsequent return) (2005)

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Iraq Climate

The average temperatures in Iraq range from higher than 48 degree C (120 Fahrenheit) in July and August to below freezing in January. A majority of the rainfall occurs from December through April and is more abundant in the mountainous region and may reach 100 centimeters a year in some places.

The summer months are marked by two kinds of wind phenomena: the southern and southeasterly sharqi, a dry, dusty wind with occasional gusts to eighty kilometers an hour, occurs from April to early June and again from late September through November; the shamal, a steady wind from the north and northwest, prevails from mid-June to mid-September. Very dry air which accompanies the shamal permits intensive sun heating of the land surface but also provides some cooling effect. Dust storms accompany these winds and may rise to height of several thousand meters, causing hazardous flying conditions and closing airports for brief periods of time.

Extremes of temperatures and humidity, coupled with the scarcity of water, will effect both men and equipment. During dry season, clouds of dust caused by vehicle movement will increase detection capabilities in desert regions. Flash flooding in wadis and across roads will hinder trafficability and resupply efforts during the rainy season. Clear, cloudless skies make air superiority a prerequisite to successful offensive operations throughout Iraq. Air operations may be reduced during windy season.

The Iraqi climate is similar to that of the extreme southwestern United States with hot, dry summers, cold winters, and a pleasant spring and fall. Roughly 90% of the annual rainfall occurs between November and April, most of it in the winter months from December through March. The remaining six months, particularly the hottest ones of June, July, and August, at approximately 102° F (32° C), are dry. The influence of the Persian Gulf on the climate of Iraq is very limited. Near the gulf the relative humidity is higher than in other parts of the country.

In the western and southern desert region, the climate is characterized by hot summers and cool winters. This region also receives brief violent rainstorms in the winter that usually total about 10 centimeters (cm). Most nights are clear in the summer, and about one third of the nights are cloudy in the winter.

In the rolling upland (foothill) region there is basically no precipitation in the summer and some showers in the winter. The winter rainfall normally averages about 38 centimeters (cm). The nights are generally clear in the summer and in the winter dense clouds are common about half of the nights.

The alluvial plain of the Tigris and Euphrates Delta in the southeast receives most of its precipitation accompanied by thunderstorms in the winter and early spring. The average annual rainfall for this area is only about 10 to 17 cm. Half of the days in winter are cloudy, and in the summer the weather is clear most of the time.

In the mountains of the north and northeast the climate is characterized by warm summers and cold winters. Precipitation occurs mainly in winter and spring, with minimal rainfall in summer. Above 1,500 m, heavy snowfalls occur in the winter, and there is some thunderstorm activity in the summer. Annual precipitation for the whole region ranges from 40 to 100 cm. Few nights are cloudy in summer and about half of the

days are cloudy in winter.

Annual temperatures (° C).

REGION

WINTER

SUMMER

EXTREMES

MIN MAX

MIN MAX

MIN MAX

Western/Southern Desert	9°	16°	20°	40°	-14°	49°
Rolling Upland	3°	13°	25°	40°	-12°	49°
Tigris/Euphrates Delta	4°	18°	25°	40°	-7°	51°
Mountains	-4°	5°	15°	25°	-30°	42°

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The corpus comprises Sumerian texts in transliteration, English prose translations and bibliographical information for each composition. The transliterations and the translations can be searched, browsed and read online using the tools of the website.

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Logogram Publishing will publish version 4 of the Sumerian Lexicon in both softcover and hardcover. The finished book, due to be in stores by December 10, 2006, will have 6400 entries in 336 pages. Where version 3 drew upon 36 sources, version 4 draws upon 96 sources.

Sumerian Lexicon

Version 3.0

by

John A. Halloran

The following lexicon contains 1,255 Sumerian logogram words and 2,511 Sumerian compound words. A logogram is a reading of a cuneiform sign which represents a word in the spoken language. Sumerian scribes invented the practice of writing in cuneiform on clay tablets sometime around 3400 B.C. in the Uruk/Warka region in the south of ancient Iraq. [The etymology of 'Iraq' may come from this region, biblical Erech. Medieval Arabic sources used the name 'Iraq' as a geographical term for the area in the south and center of the modern republic.] The Sumerian language spoken by the inventors of writing is known to us through a large body of texts and through bilingual cuneiform dictionaries of Sumerian and Akkadian, the language of their Semitic successors, to which Sumerian is not related. These bilingual dictionaries date from the Old Babylonian period (1800-1600 B.C.), by which time Sumerian had ceased to be spoken, except by the scribes. The earliest and most important words in Sumerian had their own cuneiform signs, whose origins were pictographic, making an initial repertoire of about a thousand signs or logograms. Beyond these words, two-thirds of this lexicon now consists of words that are transparent compounds of separate logogram words. I have greatly expanded the section containing compounds in this version, but I know that

many more compound words could be added.

Many cuneiform signs can be pronounced in more than one way and often two or more signs share the same pronunciation, in which case it is necessary to indicate in the transliteration which cuneiform sign is meant; Assyriologists have developed a system whereby the second homophone is marked by an acute accent (´), the third homophone by a grave accent (`), and the remainder by subscript numerals. The homophone numeration here follows the 'BCE-System' developed by Borger, Civil, and Ellermeier. The 'accents' and subscript numerals do not affect the pronunciation. The numeration system is a convention to inform Assyriologists which, for example, of the many cuneiform signs that have the reading du actually occurs on the tablet. A particular sign can often be transcribed in a long way, such as dug₄, or in a short way, such as du₁, because Sumerian was like French in omitting certain amissable final consonants except before a following vowel. Due to this lexicon's etymological orientation, you will usually find a word listed under its fullest phonetic form. Transcriptions of texts often contain the short forms, however, because Sumerologists try to accurately represent the spoken language. Short forms are listed, but you are told where to confer.

The vowels may be pronounced as follows: a as in father, u as in pull, e as in peg, and i as in hip. Of the special consonants, gilde is pronounced like ng in rang, h is pronounced like ch in German Buch or Scottish loch, and š is pronounced like sh in dash.

Following the definitions, the lexicon may indicate in a smaller font the constituent elements of words that in origin were compound words, if those elements were clear to me. Etymologies are a normal part of dictionary-making, but etymologies are also the most subject to speculation. It is possible that, in some cases, I have provided a Sumerian etymology for what is actually a loanword from another language. I encourage scholars to contact me with evidence from productive roots in other proto-languages when they have reason to believe that a Sumerian word is a loan from another language family. In light of the Sumerian propensity for forming new words through compounding in the period after they invented cuneiform signs, it should not be surprising to find this same propensity in words dating from before their invention of written signs. The structure and thinking behind the Sumerian vocabulary is to me a thing of beauty. We are fortunate to be able to look back into the minds of our prehistoric ancestors and see how they thought and lived via the words that they created.

The lexicon's etymological orientation explains why the vocabulary is organized according to the phonetic structure of the words, with words sharing the same structure being listed together and alphabetically according to their final consonants and vowels, as this method best groups together related words. This principle has been abandoned after words of the structure CVC(V) in this version, as words that are phonetically more complex than this do not group together by meaning. The phonetically more complex words and the compound words are listed alphabetically simply by their initial letters.

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The Sumerian lexicon has benefitted from several classes at UCLA with Dr. Robert Englund.

I dedicate this lexicon to the memory of Dr. Robert Hetzron, with whom I had the pleasure of studying during every week of the four years that I attended the University of California at Santa Barbara. Dr. Hetzron was a professional linguist and an expert on the Afroasiatic language family.

Sumerian vowel-only (V) words

Sumerian vowel-consonant (VC) words

Sumerian consonant-vowel (CV) words

Sumerian vowel-consonant-vowel (VCV) words

Sumerian consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC[V]) words

Sumerian's phonetically more complex logograms

Sumerian compound-sign words - initials A through E

Sumerian compound-sign words - initials G through K

Sumerian compound-sign words - initials L through R

Sumerian compound-sign words - initials S through Z

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About this capture

The Proto-Sumerian Language Invention Process

by John A. Halloran

A lexicon of Sumerian which is organized on the basis of phonetic structure, starting with phonetically simple structures and progressing to more complex phonetic structures, has revealed the process by which the proto-Sumerians invented their language.

In Sumerian, one can see that phonetically simple words correspond to early, basic concepts and phonetically complex words correspond to later, culturally advanced concepts. When the proto-Sumerians began inventing their language, they started with vowel-only words (e.g., a, 'water') and quickly progressed to three different phonetic structures involving consonants, namely:

vowel-consonant (VC, e.g., ab, 'window');

consonant-vowel (CV, e.g., ba, 'to give'); and

vowel-consonant-vowel (VCV, e.g., aba, 'lake').

The capacity of the first generation, starting as young adults, to master a large vocabulary would have been limited. There would have been a period of stability with the simple V, VC, CV, and VCV word structures. But future generations, starting as young children, began to combine the V, VC, CV, and VCV words to utilize the extended possibilities of the structure:

consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC, e.g., dab, 'to hold, take').

The CVC structure accounts for about 30 percent of all Sumerian logograms and appears to have been normative for new word formation for a long time.

Sumerian was an agglutinative language not just in its verb construction, but also in its noun or morpheme construction. An agglutinative type of language is one in which words are built up by stringing forms together. Simple structures like V, VC, CV, and sometimes VCV appear to derive their meanings by drawing upon articulatory symbolism, but the more complex phonetic structures, starting with VCV (e.g., aba, 'lake' = ab, 'niche', + a, 'water', or ída, 'river' = éd, 'to issue', + a, 'water'), often consist of sequences of smaller words combined to describe additional phenomena.

I will give illustrative examples drawn from various noun structures later in this paper. First I want to present a comprehensive list of all the vowel-only (V) words, vowel-consonant (VC) words, and consonant-vowel (CV) words. This lets you see the earliest vocabulary of proto-Sumerian.

a, e4: n., water; watercourse, canal; seminal fluid; offspring; father; tears; flood.

é: house, household; temple; plot of land.

i: n., cry of pain (derived from ér, ír, 'tears; complaint' ?).

v., to capture, defeat, overcome (cf., éd, è; i, 'to sprout')

ú: n., plant; vegetable; grass; food; bread; pasture; load.

v., to nourish, support.

adj., strong, powerful (man).

ù: n., sleep (cf., u5). [according to S. Lieberman, u, ù, and u4 were pronounced /o/]

v., to sleep.

u(3,4,8): n., an expression of protest; cries, screams; the grunting, panting of battle; fight, dispute.

v., to bend over.

u5: n., male bird, cock; totality; earth pile or levee; raised area (sometimes written ù).

v., to mount (in intercourse); to be on top of; to ride; to board (a boat); to steer,

conduct.

adj., (raised) high, especially land or ground (sometimes written ù).

u18: huge.

u20: barley.

ab: window; opening; niche, nook (cf., aba).

áb: domestic cow (a, 'water, liquid', + íb, 'middle').

íb: corner, angle, nook.

íb, éb: n., middle; waist; loins; thighs.

v., to be angry; to flare up in anger; to curse, insult.

ub: corner, angle, nook; a small room.

(kuš)ub3,5: a drum.

ub4: cavity, hole; pitfall.

ad4: lame, cripple.

éd, è; i: to go out, emerge; to send forth; to lead or bring out; to rise; to sprout; to be or become visible; to appear as a witness (the final d appears in marû conjugation).

èd, e11: to exit; to rise; to descend, set; to bring down (or up); to import; to fetch; to remove; to drain (è-dè(-d) in marû).

ud, u4: n., sun; light; day; time; weather; storm (demon).

prep., when; since.

úd[ÁŠ]: emmer (wheat).

ég, ék, íg, e: n., levee, embankment, dike, bund (a, e4, 'water', + ig, 'door').

v., to water; to speak, say (e = sing. marû, plural hamtu, and plural marû).

ig: door, entrance.

ug(2): lion; anger, fury; storm.

ug4,5,7,8: n., death; dead person.

v., to kill; to die (singular and plural marû stem; plural hamtu, which is sometimes reduplicated; cf., úš).

ug6, u6: n., amazement; gaze, glance.

v., to look at; to stare at, gaze; to be impressed.

adj., astonishing.

uh(3): lice, louse; nit; flea; moth; insect, parasite, vermin.

úh; uh, ah: phlegm; spittle; slaver, froth; paste; venom; malice.

(gtildeiš)al: digging stick; wooden mattock, pickax; forked hoe with from 2 to 4 teeth; spade.

ul: n., joy, pleasure, satisfaction; star; flower; bud; ornament; a capacity measure of 36 liters in Presargonic Girsu.

v., to glitter, shine.

adj., remote, distant (in time); ancient, enduring.

ul4: to be quick; to hurry, hasten, harass.

àm[A.AN]: the Sumerian enclitic copula - 'to be', occurs after a noun [e.g., William king-is]; who, which, what; (same) as, like (in scholarly lists).

(gi)um: a rope made of reeds (cf., umu).

an: n., sky, heaven; the god An; grain ear/date cluster ('water' + 'high').

v., to be high.

adj., high.

prep., in front.

en: n., dignitary; lord; high priest; ancestor (statue); diviner.

v., to rule.

adj., noble.

en(2,3): n., time; enigmatic background.

prep., until.

in: he, she; straw; insult, offense, invective.

ér, ír: n., tears; lamentation; prayer; complaint.

v., to weep.

ir(10): n., sweat; smell, odor, scent; perfume, fragrance.

adj., scented, perfumed, fragrant.

ir(10), er: v., to bring; to lead away.

ur: n., dog; carnivorous beast; servant; young man, warrior; enemy .

v., to tremble.

adj., humble.

ur(2,3,4): to surround; to flood; to throw overboard; to drag (over the ground) (often with -ni-); to erase, wipe out; to shear, reap, mow (reduplication class).

úr: floor; base; lap, loins; thighs, leg(s); root; trunk of a tree.

ùr: roof; entrance; mountain pass; beam, rafter.

ur5[HAR]: n., liver; spleen; heart, soul; bulk, main body; foundation; loan; obligation; interest; surplus, profit; interest-bearing debt; repayment; slave-woman.

inanimate pron., it; these, the referenced; his, hers, theirs.

v., to chew; to smell; to belch, burp; to roar; to clog, block; to imprison; to be bowed with grief; to rub something in; to rent.

demonstrative, thus; so; in this way; in the same way; followed by a negation: not at all.

us, uzmušen: domestic goose or duck.

ús, úz [UŠ]: n., side, edge; distance; in geometry: length; height; vertical; perpendicular.

v., to follow; to drive; to come near to, reach; to let reach; to transport, bring; to join;
to be next to, border; to moor, dock; to lean against.

us5, u8: mother ewe, adult female sheep.

aš: one; unique; alone.

aš(5): spider.

áš: n., wish; curse (abbreviated tàš ?, ašte ?).

v., to desire; to curse.

aš3,4,8: six (ía, 'five', + aš, 'one').

eš: n., many, much.

v., to anoint.

èš: shrine.

eš5,6,16,21: three.

uš, ús: n., foundation.

v., to support, lift; to stand upon.

UŠ: a length measure, reading unknown, = 6 ropes = 60 nindan rods..

úš: n., blood; blood vessel; death.

v., to die; to kill; to block (singular hamtu stem).

adj., dead.

ùš: placental membrane, afterbirth.

uš7: spittle.

uš8: foundation place, base.

uš11: venom, poison; spittle, slaver; moistening; spell, charm.

ùz, ud5, ut5: she-goat.

ba: n., share, portion; rations, wages.

v., to give; to divide, apportion, distribute; to pay (interchanges with bar).

(ku6)ba: a shelled creature (such as a turtle or a snail); a scraping tool.

bà: liver; liver model; omen.

bi, bé: v., to diminish, lessen.

pron., it.

poss. suffix, 'its' applies to inanimate (things and animals) and collective objects.

demonstrative suffix, this (one), that (one) - in this sense can occur with animates.

conj., and.

art., the.

adv., adverbial force suffix.

conjugation prefix, differentiates the semantic meaning of certain verbs.

bi6 [BA]: to tear; to tear off (with -ta-).

bu5: to rush around.

da: n., arm; side; nearness (to someone).

v., to hold; to be near; to protect.

prep., comitative suffix, 'with'; copula, 'and' (mainly in Sargonic date texts).

dé: to pour (often with -ni-); to water; to increase, be full; to shape, form; to instruct; to sink.

dè: ashes.

de5, di5 [RI]: to advise; to remove (earth clods) (reduplicated).

de6,2, rwedgee6: to bring, carry (-ši- or -ta- denote direction); to continue on (singular hamtu).

di: n., lawsuit, case; judgment, decision, verdict; sentence.

v., to judge, decide; to conduct oneself; to go; to escape.

du: to walk; to go; to come (sing. marû).

dù('), rwedgeú: n., work; totality.

v., to build, make; to mould, cast; to erect something on the ground; to raise up; to set up; to plant; to fasten, apply.

du7: to be finished, complete; to be suitable, fitting; to be necessary; to butt, gore, toss (reduplication class?) (regularly followed by rá).

du14: quarrel, struggle, fight.

ga: n., milk (chamber + water).

ge(2,6): girl.

gi: reed; length measure, reed = 6 cubits = 3 meters (circular + to sprout).

gi(4): to surround, besiege; to lock up (circle + to descend into).

gi(17): n., young man (small and thin like a reed).

adj., small.

gí, gé: reed mat.

gi4, ge4: to return, come back; to send (back) (with -ši-); to reject, dislike; to restore; to answer (person to whom answer is given resumed by dative prefix, and with -ni-) (circular motion + to go out, send).

gu: string, thread; wool yarn; flax; hemp; snare; net; orig. word for needle (circular + grass-like).

gú: neck; nape; river bank; side; other side; edge; front; land; pulse, chick pea (circular + u5, 'on top of'; as possible loan from Akkadian cf., Orel & Stolbova #982, *gun- "occiput, neck, nape").

gù: n., noise, sound; voice.

v., to exclaim; to utter a cry (said of an animal) (throat + u(3,4,8), 'cries, screams').

gu7, kú: n., food, sustenance; fodder; angle.

v., to eat, swallow, consume, use; to eat up, finish off; to feed, nurse, benefit (with -ni-) (throat + ú, 'food').

gtildeá: basket; house; stable.

gtildee26, gtildeá: I, myself; my.

gtildeu10: my, mine.

ha: precatative and affirmative verbal prefix: may; let; indeed.

*ha: fish (not the usual word for fish, but the fish sign may get its syllabic reading of HA from *h 'many' + a 'water' = 'fish', an alternative to the usual ku6, kua).

há, hi-a: numerous; diverse; assorted; mixed.

hà, hù, a6, u: ten (usually written: u).

he, hi: to mix [HI archaic frequency: 291].

he(2): abundance; abundant.

hu: bird (earlier word than mušen).

ia2,7,9, í: five.

ìa, ì: n., oil, fat, cream.

ia4, i4: pebble, counter.

ka: mouth [KA archaic frequency: 108; concatenates 2 sign variants].

ká: gate [? KA2 archaic frequency: 11; concatenates 4 sign variants].

ka5-(a): fox.

ki: n., earth; place; area; location; ground; grain ('base' + 'to rise, sprout') [KI archaic frequency: 386; concatenates 2 sign variants].

prep., where; wherever, whenever; behind.

ku: to base, found, build; to lie down (reduplication class) [KU archaic frequency: 64; concatenates 3 sign variants].

ku6, kua: fish (kú, 'food', + a, 'water').

la: abundance, luxury, wealth; youthful freshness and beauty; bliss, happiness; wish, desire.

lá: to penetrate, pierce, force a way into (in order to see); to know; to look after; to have a beard (cf. also, lal).

(gtildeiš)li: juniper/cedar tree.

lí: true measure; fine oil.

li9: to glisten, shine.

lu: n., many, much; man, men, people; sheep.

v., to be/make numerous, abundant; to multiply; to mix; to graze, pasture (reduplication class [?]).

lú: grown man; male; human being; someone, anyone, no one; gentleman.

lù: to disturb, agitate, trouble; to fluster, embarrass; to stir, blend.

ma: to bind.

ma(3); gtildeá: to go (Akk. alaaku).

(gtildeiš)má: boat.

ma4: to leave, depart, go out.

me, mî; gtildē: n., function, office, responsibility; ideal norm; the phenomenal area of a deity's power; divine decree, oracle; cult.

v., to be; the Sumerian copula; to say, tell.

poss. suffix, our.

me3,6,7,9: battle.

me6: to act, behave.

mí[SAL]: n., woman; female (this pronunciation of the sign found in compound words and verbs or in enclitic or proclitic position, Hallo & van Dijk, p. 85) (cf. also, mu10, munus) (compounds are more likely to preserve an older word).

adj., feminine.

mu: n., name; word; year; line on a tablet, entry; oath.

v., to name, speak.

prep., because.

conjugation prefix, suggests involvement by speaker, used especially before dative infixes, preferred for animate and agentive subjects.

mù, ma5: to mill, grind; to burn (reduplication class).

mu5: well-formed, beautiful; plump, fattened.

mu7: to shout, scream, roar; exorcism ?.

mu10[SAL]: woman; female (cf. also, mí, munus).

na: n., human being; incense.

adj., no.

modal prefix, emphatic in past tense; prohibitive in present/future tense.

na4; na: pebble, rock, ordinary stone; stone weight; token; hailstone.

na5: chest, box.

ne(-e), ne.en: this (one); that (one); demonstrative affix.

nè; ní: strength, vigor, violence; forces, host.

ni; na: he, she; that one (human animate pronoun or possessive suffix).

ní: self; body; one's own.

ní; ne4: fear; respect; frightfulness; awe.

nu: n., image, likeness, picture, figurine, statue.

adj. & adv., no, not; without; negative.

nu11[ŠIR]: light; fire, lamp; alabaster.

(gtildeiš)pa: leaf, bud, sprout; branch; wing; feather.

pa^{4,5,6}(-r): irrigation ditch, small canal, dike.

pú: well, cistern, pool, fountain; depth.

ra(-g/h): n., inundation.

v., to strike, stab, slay; to stir; to impress, stamp, or roll (a seal into clay); to branch out (from the side of a canal); to flood, overflow; to measure; to pack, haul, or throw away (with -ta-).

re⁷; ri⁶, rá, ir¹⁰; e-re⁷; er, ir: to accompany, lead; to bear; to go; to drive along or away; to stir, mix (plural hamtu e.re⁷.er).

ri: v., to throw, cast; to place, pour, put into; to place upon or against (with -ši-); to be located; to touch; to moor a boat; to break open; to expel, remove, throw away, sweep away (with -ta-); to emit; to beget; to blow (said of a storm); to inundate; to exchange; to take; to gather, glean; to plan something (ri is hamtu form, ri-g is marû form, ri-ri-g is plural).

adj., far.

demonstrative affix, that, those; regarding that (where the reference is to something outside the view of the speaker - over yonder).

ru: n., present, gift.

v., to blow; to give; to send (cf., rúg).

rù: to be equal in size or rank.

ru⁵: to send forth shoots, buds, or blossoms; to butt; to gore.

sa: n., sinew, tendon; cord; net; mat; bundle; string of a musical instrument.

v., to roast (barley).

sá: n., advice.

v., to approach or equal in value; to compare with; to compete (with -da-).

sa⁴: to name; to call by name.

sa⁵: n., red ocher.

adj., red, red-brown.

sa7: well-formed.

sa9: half.

sa10: to be equivalent; to buy (Akkadian loan ?).

si: n., horn(s); antenna(e); line; ray(s); light; plowland.

v., to stand upright; to be straight; to be in order; to become completely still.

adj., regular, normal.

si; su; sa; sa5: v., to fill up; to fill with (with -da-); to survey a field; to inundate; to be full; to be sufficient, enough; to increase; to compensate, repay, replace; to grow weak (probably reduplication class).

adj., suitable, fit.

si4, su4, sa11: red.

si14: a small pot.

su: n., body; flesh; skin; animal hide; relatives; substitute.

adj., naked.

su4: to grow; to multiply.

su9; ša4: n., red ocher.

v., to mourn, grieve.

sux: to spread.

ša: to dry up.

ša5: to cut, break (reeds).

še: n., barley; grain; a small length measure, barleycorn.

šè: n., portion.

še10: excrement, dung.

šu: n., hand; share, portion, bundle; strength; control.

v., to pour.

šu4(-g): to stand; to be deployed, set up (plural, reduplication class).

ta, dá: n., nature, character.

te, de4: n., cheek, chin.

te, de4; ti: v., to approach, meet (someone: dative); to attack, assault; to be frightened (alternating class, hamtu stem).

tè: an alkaline plant (?); soapwort (?); cardamon.

te8[Á]mušen: bearded vulture.

ti: side, rib; arrow.

tu: to interfere.

tu5,17: n., bath.

v., to wash, bathe; to pour; to make libation (probably reduplication class).

tu6: exorcism; conjuration; exorcistic formula.

tu7: soup; soup pitcher.

za: you (singular).

za: to make noise (occurs as the verb in compounds with repetitive, onomatopoeic syllables symbolizing a repeated monotonous noise or motion).

za(2): precious stone, gemstone; bead; hailstone; pit; kernel.

zé[ZÍ]: to cut; to shear, cut hair; to pluck.

zi: n., breathing; breath (of life); throat; soul.

zí: stench; bile; bitter.

zu, sú: n., wisdom, knowledge.

v., to know; to understand; to inform, teach (in marû reduplicated form); to learn from someone (with -da-); to recognize someone (with -da-); to be experienced, qualified.

zú, su11[KA]: tooth, teeth; prong; thorn; blade; ivory; flint, chert; obsidian; natural glass.

Written Sumerian contains many examples of homonymy, differently written signs that at least in the Akkadian transcription appear to have been pronounced the same, such as ka, 'mouth' and ká, 'gate'. Also, individual signs show many instances of polysemy, using the same sign or word to mean many things, such as 'star', 'flower', 'remote', 'ancient' and 'joy' for the ul sign. This raises the question, "What is a word?" Before the invention of writing, when language was only spoken, a word was something other than a dictionary entry. More primary than words are objects and actions. Early humans faced the task of agreeing on vowel-consonant combinations that would point at all the real objects that existed in their world. The speech sounds upon which they agreed were of a more limited number than the objects at which they had to point. Early humans used words as deictic pointers. Context made it clear at what object or action they were pointing. Prior to speech invention, humans had to be expert at deducing from context the significance of another human's actions, expressions, or gestures. Polysemy could run rampant in early language because listeners would understand from the context at what speakers were using their words to point. By inventing multiple homonymous written signs to represent the more diverse concepts shared by particular consonant-vowel combinations, the Sumerian scribes sought to order, organize, and separate into separate word-signs some of the less related deictic objects of polysemic speech words.

Languages are like filing systems. They have to have storage spaces for all the 'stuff' that the language speakers have to talk about. Depending on the initial design decisions that went into each language filing system's structure and size, the available storage spaces can be abundant or few and overloaded. The result can be a language house that is either semantically clean and organized or semantically messy and cluttered.

The entire lexicon of 1,255 Sumerian logogram words and 2,511 Sumerian compound words can be found on the Internet at <http://www.sumerian.org/sumerlex.htm>.

The more complex word structures in Sumerian are:

CVCV (e.g., gaba, 'breast' = ga, 'milk' + ba, 'to give');

VCVC (e.g., ušub, 'basket' = uš, 'to support, lift' + ub4, 'cavity, hole');

VCCV (e.g., úrgu, 'ferocity' = ur, 'dog' + gù, 'to bark');

VCCVC (e.g., endub, 'cook' = en, 'lord, manager' + dub, 'to pour, heap, move in a circle, shake');

VCVCCV (e.g., urudu, 'copper' = ùru, 'luminous object' + dū, 'to mould, cast');

CVCVC (e.g., gtildeadub, 'tablet container' = gtildear;gtildeá, 'storeroom; to store' + dub, 'tablet');

CVCCV (e.g., gtildeéšbu, 'grappling hook for a wrestler' = gtildeiš, 'wood; tool' + bu, 'to pull, draw');

VCVCVC (e.g., urugal, 'the netherworld' = uru, 'city' + gal, 'big');

VCCVCV (e.g., eškiri, 'nose rope, halter, bridle' = éše, 'rope' + kīri, 'muzzle');

VCCVCVC (e.g., umbisagtilde, 'scribe' = umbin, 'nail or nail impression (on a clay tablet)' + sagtilde, 'head; human');

VCCVCCV (e.g., immindu, 'roasting, baking oven' = im, 'clay' + ninda, 'bread');

VCVCCVC (e.g., elamkuš, 'bladder' = éllagtilde, 'kidneys' + kuš, 'skin');

CVCCVC (e.g., kankal, 'waste land, uncultivated land' = ki, 'place, ground' + gtildeál 'to be available');

CVCVCV (e.g., tabira, 'metalworker' = tab, 'to hold, clasp' + ùru, 'luminous object');

CVCVCVC (e.g., buranun, 'Euphrates river' = bu5, 'to rush around' + ra, 'to flood, overflow' + nun, 'noble, great');

CVCVCCV (e.g., kurušda, 'sweet; plump, fat; honey; sweet fodder (for fattening cattle)' = kurun, 'sweet grape' + šita4; èšda, 'to bind');

CVCVCCVC (e.g., muhaldim, 'baker, cook' = mù, 'to mill, grind' + hal, 'to apportion' + dím, 'to fashion');

CVCCVCV (e.g., mangaga, 'palm fiber, bast' = man, 'equal, partner' + gag, 'nail, peg' + a(k), 'of');

CVCCVCVC (e.g., dalhamun, 'tornado; violent storm' = dal, 'to fly' + ha-mun, 'mutually opposing or contrasting'); and

CVCCVCVCV (e.g., kingusili, 'greater part' = kígtilde, 'task', + sílig, 'hand [of five fingers]').

In our transcription, the proto-Sumerians distinguished between the four vowel sounds known to the Semitic Akkadians, from whom we derive our knowledge of Sumerian. It is

possible that in some cases our vowel /u/ should be transcribed as /o/1, making at least five vowels. Quickly exhausting the symbolic possibilities of the vowels, the proto-Sumerians constructed symbolic analogies between what we call consonants, which involved impeding one's vocal production in various ways, and certain external objects and actions. The Sumerians employed the labial, dental-alveolar, and velar stops, nasals, fricatives, and approximates indicated in the lexicon, with the important difference from us that they did not distinguish between voiced and voiceless stops like /b/ and /p/, /d/ and /t/, or /g/ and /k/. Our varying use of one or the other transcription represents a pronunciation distinction which has not yet been adequately clarified.²

The structurally-organized lexicon makes it easy to see that words having the same consonant are often related in meaning. Certain sets of abstract ideas are associated with each consonant. Insofar as they can be synthesized from the concrete words found in the lexicon, following are the abstract ideas associated with each consonantal phoneme.

/b:p/ = cavity, receptacle, container; to take, choose, allocate; choice.

/d:t/ = edge; side; to approach; to leave; to interact with; to act, do, perform.

/g:k/ = throat; circle; entrance; base; long, narrow; to consume; to kill; to utter.

/m/ = female; to cause to be; to be; to make go out; to go; transportation; to speak.

/n/ = discrete individuality; to be high; to be awesome.

/gtilde/ = self; kin; to love, benefit.

/l/ = happiness; abundance; food production; males.

/r/ = to protect, shelter, support; to send forth, emit, secrete.

/s/ = skill; to be near; to enclose, bind; to be full.

/š/ = quantity, portion; grain; moistness; to support, suspend.

/h/ = numerousness; saliva.

/z/ = to cook, roast; meat (animal); teeth; to cut; breathing.

Having identified the sets of ideas associated with each proto-Sumerian consonant, the question arises as to why these particular associations and not others. The answer is foreign to the modern mind, accustomed as we are to words which are constructed of arbitrary consonants and vowels, words which we commit to memory as unbreakable morphemic sequences. In modern languages, except for a few words which are

recognized to originate in sound symbolism, meaning is divorced from sound. The sounds that make up modern words do not have meanings which everyone acknowledges. This was not the case for the inventors of the proto-Sumerian language because they were trying to use the mouth and the sounds that it produced to 'point' at objects and actions. One can think of these sounds as 'mouth-gestures' or 'mouth-pictures'. What one did with the mouth to produce the consonantal sounds had to have enough logical similarity to the referenced actions or objects to trigger a mental association. Thinking is based on stringing together parts which economically represent wholes. The mind can recall a whole object or action when presented with just a part of it. Proto-Sumerian mouth-gestures tried to recreate enough features of part of an object or action to enable recalling the whole.

The proto-Sumerians recognized the following articulatory symbolism:

/b:p/: The lips required to produce a bilabial stop were taken to represent the mouth as a whole, that is, as a 'cavity' or 'receptacle'; while as prehensile organs, which furthermore demarcate the entrance to each person, their sound came to represent 'taking' or 'allocating'.

/d:t/: A dental-alveolar stop is produced with the tip of the tongue closed against the upper incisors and/or the alveolar ridge and with the sides of the tongue pressed against the upper molars. The closure of the oral cavity on all sides led to the meaning 'edge, side', which led to associated verbal meanings such as interaction between two parties or between one party and an 'edge' or 'boundary'. Since chewing with the molars is the mouth's primary activity, this phoneme also meant 'to act, do, perform'.

/g:k/: A velar stop is produced with the back of the tongue closed against the velum or palate. Of the stops it is the farthest back, so its meanings derive mainly from association with the throat. Such meanings include 'entrance', 'long, narrow', 'to consume', 'to kill', and 'to utter'. The production of this phoneme at the base of the oral cavity is what led to the meaning 'site, base'.

/m/: This is a bilabial nasal resonant, in which the oral cavity closed by the lips provides a resonating chamber for the voice which is directed out through the nasal cavity. The idea of a chamber may have led to the idea of a 'woman' in her child-bearing capacity and thence to the meanings 'to cause to be' and 'to go out'. It should be noted that *ama* means 'mother' in many other languages besides Sumerian and thus presumably derives from baby talk. But because its baby talk counterpart meaning 'father', *ada*, shows no signs of having influenced the meaning of /d:t/, we should retain the vocal mechanics explanation for /m/.

/n/: The resonating cavity of this alveolar nasal resonant is foreshortened by the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge. The light touch of the tip of the tongue inspired the idea of 'discrete individuality', while its position at the roof of the mouth led to the meaning 'to be high'.

/ŋ/: This sound is called a velar nasal resonant. With the tongue held closed as for /g:k/, the voice is allowed to escape through the nasal cavity, producing a sound like ng in rang. The sound resonates mainly in the throat, sinus, and nasal cavity. As the most internal of the resonants, the sound came to mean 'self'.

/l/: A lateral oral resonant is produced like a vowel except that the tip of the tongue contacts the alveolar ridge, which laterally displaces the air flow. The effortlessness of producing this consonant caused it to be associated with 'happiness', 'abundance', and with those tireless producers of abundance, 'males'.

/r/: This oral resonant is also produced like a vowel except that by raising the tongue to the palate a narrow passageway is created to control emission of the sound. The controlling action and the position of the tongue relative to the palate led to the meanings 'to send forth, emit' and 'to protect, shelter, support'.

/s/: A dental-alveolar voiceless fricative is generated by closing the oral cavity with the tongue while directing air past the grooved tip of the tongue held against the alveolar ridge proximate to the teeth with resulting audible friction. The difficulty of this operation led to the meaning 'skill'. The tongue's proximity to the teeth led to the meaning 'to be near', while the closure of the oral cavity generated the meanings 'to enclose, bind' and 'to be full'.

/ʃ/: A palatal voiceless fricative, like the sh in shell, is produced by raising the blade of the tongue to the alveolar ridge and palate to create a low but broad opening, direction of air through which results in audible friction. As with the phoneme /r/, the position of the tongue raised to the palate led to the meaning 'to support', which in turn led to 'rope'. The 'moistness' association of this consonant derives from its gushing sound. The meanings 'quantity, portion' and 'grain' are best explained in connection with the next consonantal phoneme, /h/.

/h/: This is a velar voiceless fricative, pronounced like the ch in German Buch or Scottish loch. The back of the tongue is held close to the velum so that when air is forced past the constriction the result is a series of small explosions. The repetitive explosiveness is what led to the meaning 'numerousness'. This contrasts with the 'quantity' of /ʃ/ in the same way that 'many' contrasts with 'much' - the distinct explosions of /h/ correspond to 'many' and the sustained, smooth friction of /ʃ/ corresponds to 'much'. This consonant refers to saliva or phlegm because of its similarity to the sound of hawking phlegm.

/z/: The tongue position for this dental-alveolar voiced fricative is the same as for the voiceless fricative /s/. The position of the tongue against the teeth caused it to mean 'tooth, teeth' and 'to cut'. The resemblance to a sizzling sound led to the associations 'to cook, roast' and 'meat (animal)'. The phoneme may mean 'breathing' because, as recognized by cartoonists, it resembles the sound of snoring.

Do the Sumerian vowel words display articulatory symbolism? Thirty years ago Johannesson wrote that, "The first human needs are food and drink and the appeasement of sex; primitive speech must be closely related to these needs."³ This is what we find in the proto-Sumerian vowel word vocabulary. /u/ is 'plant, food', /a/ is 'water, drink', and it appears that /o/ refers to 'sleep' or 'intercourse'. The small round vowel /u/ points at objects like plant stems. The vowel /a/ is how the mouth is held when drinking. The big round vowel /o/ could symbolize either the male or the female sexual organs. The small high-pitched vowel /i/ symbolizes small things so it means 'to sprout'. The wide, square vowel /e/ pointed at rectangular things like 'house'.

In a search of the literature, I was surprised to find that another scholar has already discovered a similar system of meaningful phonemes (she calls them phememes) in the proto-language that led to Indo-European and some other language families.⁴ This scholar arrived at her insight by doing comparative work across language families. She noticed that the same consonants kept having certain kinds of meanings. The meanings that she synthesized for the Eurasian proto-language are spatial and abstract in nature, as compared to the analogic and concrete meanings that I have deduced for the proto-Sumerian phememes. This might reflect a sex-related difference in thinking style between the inventors of the two proto-languages, with the inventors of the proto-Eurasian language favoring the spatial right-brain and the inventors of the proto-Sumerian language favoring the sequential left-brain. Another suggestion is that the primarily verbal monosyllabic roots of Indo-European were developed under the influence of an already existing mimetic or gesture language.⁵

While linguists who are only familiar with Eurasian languages may argue for monogenesis of all world languages, the proto-Sumerian lexicon demonstrates that multiple invention or polygenesis of spoken language is what actually occurred. The words of proto-Sumerian are fundamentally different from those of proto-Indo-European. However, because the proto-Sumerians appear to be unique in having started with vowel-only words, they have a good claim not just to having invented a complete spoken symbol system, but to having originated the concept of such a system. Non-speaking populations could have invented their own systems once they had been exposed to the concept of speech (this is not to deny that multiple populations could have invented the concept of speech independently, cf., the use of clicks in Africa). A good parallel example is how the Sumerian invention of the concept of writing appears to have inspired the creation of very different forms of writing in Pre-Dynastic Egypt and the Indus civilization of Pakistan and India. What was transmitted was not the exact pictographs of the early Sumerian writing system, but their concept of writing.

The process of spreading the concept of speech from speaking populations to non-speaking populations probably involved incomplete degrees to which existing speech elements were transmitted or borrowed, with the remainder having to be invented autonomously. For this reason, the biological model of a family tree is an inappropriate model for examining early language relatedness. Languages which share important elements are not necessarily descended from an even more remote common ancestor.

Biological forms must be descended from ancestral forms. This cannot be true for languages for an infinite time depth. The method of glottochronology must break down when it reaches the event horizon at which a population went from nonspeaking to speaking. In some cases, just the concept of speech will have inspired a population to invent their own language. In other cases, a population will have built their new language upon a repertoire of elements taken from an existing language.

There are clues within the lexicon telling us when the proto-Sumerian event horizon occurred. The n+vowel words suggest that the system of clay tokens for counting and recording which prevailed throughout the Near East from 8,000 B.C. to 3,000 B.C. was already in use. The word for 'clay', imi, is related to the word for 'tongue; speech', eme. The word ùr meaning both roof and entrance, as well as the word ub meaning corner, suggests that they lived in the close-packed, rectangular houses entered through holes in the roof found in Western Iran at sites like Ganj Dareh as well as in Anatolia at sites like Çatal Hüyük. Proto-Sumerian includes words for domesticated animals such as dog (ur), goat (üz), cow (áb), and sheep (us5). Simple agriculture is indicated by the words for grain (še), irrigation ditch (ég), and digging stick (al). The indications are that the proto-Sumerians invented their language at the start of the Near Eastern Neolithic, approximately ten thousand years ago.

Notes

S.J. Lieberman, "The Phoneme /o/ in Sumerian," in *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones*, ed. M.A. Powell Jr. and R.H. Sack (AOAT 203 [1979]), pp. 21-28. A count of vowel occurrences in the lexicon from V to CVC words indicates 274 vowels transcribed as Akkadian /a/, 352 vowels as Akkadian /u/, 213 vowels as Akkadian /i/, and 104 as Akkadian /e/.

J. Krecher, "Verschlusslaute und Betonung im Sumerischen," in *lišan mithurti*, ed. W. Röllig (AOAT 1 [1969]), p. 163; T. Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p. 367; J.A. Black, "The Alleged Extra Phonemes of Sumerian," *Revue d'Assyriologie*, 84(1990), pp. 107-18.

A. Jóhannesson, *The Third Stage in the Creation of Human Language*, (Reykjavík and Oxford, 1963), p. 27.

M.L. Foster, "The Symbolic Structure of Primordial Language," in *Human Evolution: Biosocial Perspectives*, ed. S.L. Washburn and E.R. McCown (*Perspectives on Human Evolution*, vol. IV, Menlo Park, 1978), pp. 77-121.

G. Fano, *The Origins and Nature of Language*, trans. by S. Petrilli, (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1992), p. 109.

D. Schmandt-Besserat, *Before Writing* (Austin, Texas, 1992).

Last Revised October 16, 2005

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<http://www.sumerian.org/prot-sum.htm>

You are Visitor: since August 25th, 1999

<http://www.sumerian.org/tokens.htm>

169 captures

9 Feb 2000 - 27 May 2025

Feb JUN Aug

15

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

Symbolic Counting Tokens from the Early Near East

These are samples of the clay counters used in the Near East from about 9,000 B.C. (calibrated) to 1500 B.C. There were about 500 distinct types, although not in all times and places. Tokens start to be found at widely separated sites as of 8,000 B.C. (C-14), such as Level III of Tell Mureybet in Syria and Level E of Ganj Dareh in western Iran. Tokens were used at sites throughout the Near East, from Israel to Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, with the exception of Central Anatolia. The farthest extent of their use was from Khartoum in the Sudan to the pre-Harappan site of Mehrgahr in Pakistan. Regarding the cultural significance of this system, their primary researcher says, "The tokens were an entirely new medium for conveying information. Compared to the previous tallies, the conceptual leap was to endow each token shape, such as the cone, sphere, or disk, with a specific meaning." "The token system was, in fact, the first code -- the earliest system of signs used for transmitting information." Denise Schmandt-Besserat, *Before Writing, Volume 1, From Counting to Cuneiform* (University of Texas Press, Austin: 1992), p. 161.

Perhaps the author of this quote does not realize that the sounds of spoken language are also a system of standardized symbolic signs. However, one does find that the tokens were already in existence when the proto-Sumerians invented their simple consonant-vowel words, which include na4: 'pebble, stone; token'; na5: 'chest, box'; nu: 'image, likeness, picture, figurine, statue'. Note also ni; na: 'he, she; that one'; ní: 'self; body'; ia2,7,9, í: 'five'; ia4, i4: 'pebble, counter'; imi, im, em: 'clay'; eme: 'tongue; speech'. On the basis of this evidence, the implication that the tokens as a system for transmitting information preceded the system of spoken language appears to be correct.

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Last modified on December 8, 1996.

<http://www.sumerian.org/tokens.htm>

<http://www.sumerian.org/map.htm>

174 captures

2 Mar 2000 - 15 Sep 2025

Apr JUN Aug

15

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

Map of Sumerian Neolithic and Chalcolithic Archaeological Sites

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<http://www.sumerian.org/map.htm>

<http://www.sumerian.org/sumerfaq.htm>

348 captures

20 Sep 2002 - 8 Nov 2025

Apr JUN Jul

15

2005 2006 2007

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1. Hebrew and Sumerian

>Is Hebrew a daughter language of Sumerian?

No. Hebrew belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family. Sumerian is a different language family.

>How different are the following languages. Akkadian, Phoenician, Egyptian

>It is believed that Jesus (on the cross) said, Eli eli lama shabatani (I

>think this to be Aramaic) in Hebrew it would be Eli Eli lama azaftani,

>consequently could I assume that Hebrew is a branch of Aramaic.?

The languages mentioned are all sister languages, spoken simultaneously in different places. Egyptian is related to Semitic languages such as Akkadian, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Phoenician.

Return to questions list.

2. Permission to Use Cuneiform Writing Sample

>i am working on an old testament commentary & i would like to include a

>sample illustration of cuneiform script. i was wondering if i might be able

>to use the sample sumerian proverb at url

><http://www.sumerian.org/proverbs.htm>

Sure, that is just a scan of a page in Gordon's book on Sumerian Proverbs, and it did not have a copyright notice on it.

Return to questions list.

3. Timeline of Mesopotamian History

> I am a student who studies at [snip]. I've recently been given
>a task to research for a timeline based on Mesopotamia in my history
>class. Since I am new to the net, I need some help from u. Could u pls
>suggest me good sites for timelines based on Mesopotamia?

Look at the bottom of the Mesopotamia links on my links page, for a site called A
Chronology of the Ancient Near East.
Return to questions list.

4. Sumerian Version, Biblical Story of Job

>Any idea where I might find a copy of the story, legend of the
>Sumerian Job? thanks.

Samuel Noah Kramer translated a text that he described as a Sumerian Job text starting
on page 127 of his book The Sumerians, Their History, Culture, and Character, 1963.

I do not know where the cuneiform text or its transliteration was published or even its
museum number.
Return to questions list.

5. Sumerian True Type Font

>I love your Sumerian page. By chance do you have a Sumerian True Type Font?
>If so, where did you acquire it?

I don't think that you got to the bottom of the overview page, where it says that the
downloadable Winword file archive includes a Sumerian TrueType Font, which I created
deliberately with no copyright notice.
Return to questions list.

6. "pukku" and "mekku" in Gilgamesh

>I have read a Swedish translation of the Gilgamesh epos published in
>1965. In the 12th tablet Gilgamesh makes and loses a tambukku and a
>mikkû (the diacritic sign of the last letter should be turned upside
>down, but I cannot get it correct). The translator remarks that it is
>unknown what these things are; they are probably instruments or weapons.
>Do you know whether scholars have been able to establish the meaning of
>these words?

I read the Sumerian version of Gilgamesh and Enkidu going down to the underworld at
UCLA last spring with Dr. Englund. We understood the terms to be pukku and mekku

and, while it is not completely certain, that they involve a stick and ball or stick and hoop, with which the young men played in a game in the central street, at which it was rather important to win, for some ritualistic or other social reason. It sounded as if at sunset they left the ball or hoop in position, and resumed the next day.

Wolfram von Soden's Akkadisches Handwörterbuch has a different point of view from that of Benno Landsberger, who is primarily responsible for the view above. He translates pukku(m) as 'drum' and mekku as 'clapper' or 'drumstick'.
Return to questions list.

7. Sumerian Language ba- Prefix

>I am trying to study the Sumerian language.
>So far I know about two main views about the prefix ba-: 1. reflexive,
>medial or passive ("used when there is no transitive subject", as you
>have written in the LSL) and 2. like bi- , expressing a simultaneous,
>logically connected or finished "perfektivisch" process (if I have got
>Victor Christian, Bertraege zur Sumerische Grammatik correctly). But
>this is an old book (from the 1950's, the only one available in
>Bulgaria). I've got the impression that Thomsen's The Sumerian Language
>is "currently the standard text" , expressing the most modern views
>about Sumerian. However, I don't have the book and can't get it for now.
>So could you please tell me which one of these two views is defended in
>Thomsen's and if neither of them - what?

Thomsen, page 179:

"/mu-/ is preferred with animate and agentive subjects, that means that /mu-/ occurs mostly in transitive forms.

"/ba-/ is preferred when the subject is inanimate and/or non-agentive, i.e. most often in intransitive/one-participant verbal forms."

/bi-/ has been claimed to have locative-terminative force as opposed to purely locative force for /ba-/, but Thomsen says on p. 184, that it "is most probably not automatically employed for the reason of concord with a loc.-term. or loc. noun, but it rather serves the semantic differentiation of the verb. It seems to be used with certain verbs or in a specific sense of the verb...."

Return to questions list.

8. Sumerian Eden?

>I was wondering if you could answer a question for me. I have read somewhere
>that the name "Eden" was a Sumerian word. I would have thought it was a
>Hebrew word, but then again, I don't know the relationship of the Sumerian
>language and the Hebrew language.

>

>At any rate, if Eden, Adam, and/or Eve are Sumerian words, would you
>please tell me if they have a translation/meaning?

EDIN is a Sumerian word, but it refers to the steppe land between the two rivers, where the herd animals grazed.

Return to questions list.

9. Hungarian and Sumerian

>I am trying to identify the modern and archaic Hungarian words which
>have their alleged origin from the Sumerian logograms on your site.

>

>I would like to publish (a set of) web page(s) of my comparisons. I
>cannot claim to be a professional linguist so my work will have faults
>and mistakes. The pages will simply have the logogram and its meaning
>together with the Hungarian words which I believe 'evolved' out of the
>Sumerian.

>

>I have already examined a few hundred of the logograms and the results
>are interesting. I would like permission to use your information
>concerning the Sumerian logograms on my personal web pages at
>[snip]

Please e-mail to me in advance your proposed use of my material.

Have you seen the similar work by Fred Hamori? There is a link to his Ural-Altaic comparison pages in my links page.

Return to questions list.

10. Enable Sumerian True Type Font

>"When you open the SUMERIAN.DOC file, ensure that at File,
>Templates, there is a valid path to the enclosed
>SUMERIAN.DOT template file."

>

>I did all that and added the Sumerian true font file, but it
>seems to make no difference, am I doing something wrong.
>What should it look like?

It should have the tilde over some of the letters g, and it should have the dish under the letter h. Those characters in particular make the special font necessary.

Did you go to Start, Settings, Control Panel, Fonts, and select File and Add New Font?

When you scroll down in the Fonts listbox, does it show you the Sumerian font?

>How kind of you to care.

>

>I have it working now, thank you.

Return to questions list.

11. Development of Cuneiform From Pictographs

>Is there another author like Labat that shows

>the early development of cuneiform from pictographs and have

>his identifications been universally accepted?

Labat was a good scholar who worked in the mainstream of Assyriology. His book is not controversial.

Other books that you could check out:

M.W. Green and H.J. Nissen, Zeichenliste der Archaischen Texte aus Uruk [ZATU] (Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka, 11; Archaische Texte aus Uruk, 2); Berlin 1987.

P. Steinkeller, review of M.W. Green and H.J. Nissen, Bibliotheca Orientalis 52 (1995), pp. 689-713.

R. K. Englund & J.-P. Grégoire, The Proto-Cuneiform Texts from Jemdet Nasr, Gebr. Mann Verlag, Berlin, 1991.

A. Deimel, Die Inschriften von Fara I: Liste der archaischen Keilschriftzeichen, WVDOG 40, Leipzig 1922.

Y. Rosengarten, Répertoire commenté des signes présargoniques sumériens de Lagas, Éditions E. de Boccard, Paris, 1967.

K. Volk, A Sumerian Reader, vol. 18 in Studia Pohl: Series Maior; Rome 1997 (this practical, inexpensive book includes a nice, though incomplete, sign-list).
Return to questions list.

12. Sumerian Word for Venus

>What is the sumerian word for venus?

Most often, Venus as a planet is called Ninanna, the lady of heaven. But Inanna, Sumer's most popular goddess, who had many functions, was identified with the planet Venus, both as the war-like morning star and as the love goddess evening star.

Return to questions list.

13. Sumerian Alphabet?

> I am trying to find a Sumerian alphabet. Does one exist? Or is it all
> symbols meaning whole words. If you can help me or direct me to a web site
> that can help I would greatly appreciate it. Thanking you in advance,

When the Sumerians invented their writing system around 5400 years ago, it was a pictographic and ideographic system like the Chinese, and as you know, the Chinese have over a thousand characters to their writing, so it is not alphabetic.

At my web site you can order the book, A Manual of Sumerian Grammar and Texts, by John L. Hayes which will introduce you to the Sumerian writing.

Return to questions list.

14. Sumerian "mashkim" as Demons?

> Correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't the Sumerian word "Maskim" mean one of
> seven demons that were said to devour blood at night. If or if not, could you
> possibly tell me a little about these demons?

Possibly the later Babylonians used the word in this way, by which time Sumerian had been dead as a spoken language for centuries. When the language was spoken, mashkim meant "inspector, monitor, sheriff, commissioner".

Return to questions list.

15. Zecharia Sitchen; Sumerian Language Suppressed?

> Zecharia Sitchen translates Sumerian and writes extreme thought provoking ideas.
> I have read all his works, and have read others opinions of his
> translations and conclusions, but not another scholar on Sumerian
> language. What do you make of his translations and conclusions, I am too
> old to learn Sumerian as I am still learning English.

You know the saying, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing?

When looking at early materials, it really helps if you know what their writings meant in the context of their culture, which Sitchen neither knows nor cares about.

> One more question.
> How could Sumerian not be related to any other language? It was my
> understanding that there was a commonality with all spoken languages.

What is the source of your information? And whatever your source is, how could he or

she know that?

- >Sitchen's books answer a lot of
- >questions, and of course, raise many others. Still, looking at the
- >Sumerian religious beliefs, and knowing how civilized they were, why
- >wouldn't their religion be the most mainstream? I read that there are
- >many untranslated Sumerian texts, and that there are many hundreds still
- >in museums unnoticed in basements, how was this knowledge suppressed?
- >Why are we now just reading about the Sumerians? The Church takes some
- >blame, but what of the scientist and linguist? How was it so long ignored?

Not everything is a conspiracy. The Sumerian language was actually remembered in Mesopotamia for 2,000 years after it stopped being spoken. But the Greeks did not know about it, so the existence of the Sumerians was forgotten. The latest cuneiform clay tablet to be dated astronomically was written in the late 1st century A.D. Scholars have been trying to figure out the Sumerian language for about 140 years now. You can find some good introductory books by Samuel Noah Kramer at an on-line bookseller. Return to questions list.

16. Hebrew ELOHIM

- >Does the hebrew word ELOHIM have sumerian origins?

There is an Afro-Asiatic root `ilay, which means 'to be high'. In Semitic and Hebrew, it manifests as elow, which is probably the origin of elohim, 'gods'.

So the answer is no, the word does not have Sumerian origins.
Return to questions list.

17. Sumerian Proverbs Page

- >I was very pleased to see your page on Sumerian. I'm currently building
- >proverb pages at <http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Discourse/Proverbs/> and wondered if
- >you had trouble uploading the proverb page at
- ><http://www.sumerian.org/proverbs.htm> or if it is simply
- >under construction.

- >Your page of Sumerian proverbs at <http://www.sumerian.org/proverbs.htm> is
- >unfortunately truncated; it looks like the upload process was interrupted.
- >Your readers would very much appreciate a full version!

Sorry there aren't more proverbs there, but it is intended more as an illustration of Sumerian writing and language than as a list of proverbs.

To understand why it ends the way that it does, you have to try clicking on some of the

signs in the graphic - different parts of the graphic are mapped to hidden labels for each Sumerian word on its own line.

The page was in the nature of an exercise for me to demonstrate a sample of cuneiform writing and Sumerian sentences to a curious public. If you are interested in Sumerian proverbs, Bendt Alster has published a comprehensive, authoritative book in 2 volumes, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer*, 1997, available from Eisenbraun's, to which there is a link at my links page.

Return to questions list.

18. Sumerian Audio File?

>Dear sirs, navigating I came about your pages in the net. Actually what
>I need to find is an audio file for sumerian and ancient egyptian languages,
>are there any?
>could you give your advise.

Order the CMAA audio tape of the Joan Goodnick Westenholz lecture, *Enheduanna: Princess, Priestess, Poetess*, from May 10, 1999 in which the lecturer read quite a bit of Sumerian, tape WAW99-2 in the California Museum of Ancient Art audiotape catalog.

There is also a link at my links page of brief Sumerian and possibly Egyptian greetings from the Voyager spacecraft record.

Return to questions list.

19. "The Sumerian Problem"

>I was just wondering what your take on "the Sumerian problem" was. I am in a
>class at NC State on Civilizations of the Ancient near East and I have been
>trying to gather opinions on the so-called Sumerian problem. I have read
>through Tom Jones' book the Sumerian problem and am frankly stumped. There is
>evidence to suggest that they were indigenous to the area and there is also
>evidence to suggest some outside influence...even a migration, perhaps from
>the Indus Valley.

I think that the Sumerian 'problem' is an illusion. The Sumerian lexicon indicates continuity within Mesopotamia and then coexistence with the Akkadians. The map at my web site shows you what I think about the origin of the Sumerians.

Return to questions list.

20. The Deity Ningishzida

>Isn't the word Ningishzida a sumerian word for the serpent-god???
>Please enlighten me.

Ningishzida was a guardian of the door to the underworld who has a horned snake as his symbol.

He appears to have been associated with trees, fertility, and snakes. Thorkild Jacobsen wrote that the roots of the tree draw nourishment from deep underground and have the appearance of entwining snakes.

>I do appreciate the information. Is Ningishzida a Sumerian word??

Yes, it means lord of the good tree (or faithful tool). Sometimes there is some interplay between the word for tree and the word for penis, so he could be a god of fertility also. Return to questions list.

21. Organization of the Sumerian Lexicon

>A very basic question/complaint: why not give the Akkadian translations as
>well? I realize of course that not every student of Sumerian knows Akkadian;
>and that your emphasis is on Sumerian; and rightly so. Nonetheless, in my
>opinion a strong case for including the Akkadian translations would be that
>one can gain access to a much wider range of meaning, and therefore a
>more precise understanding of the Sumerian word's specific meaning(s),
>by looking up the Akkadian translations in AHW or CAD.

I would be unnecessarily duplicating the information that is now available at the ISL/Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary web site, which recently added complete cross references to the AHW. There is a link at my web site. Give that a try. You will see that there can be 20 Akkadian words that correspond to a single Sumerian word. There is not a one-to-one mapping between the two languages. What you want is a Sumerian-Akkadian lexicon, equal in size to the Sumerian-English lexicon.

>And, finally, it might be helpful, in the introduction, to explain how the
>CVC words are alphabetized. I think I have it figured out, but I don't
>understand the reasoning behind it.

Since the lexical material is presented in a single document that can be scanned, instead of via a look-up database, the method of sorting by the final consonants allows words with related meanings and forms to often be listed adjacently, e.g., gub3, hab, and hub2 are related words that are listed next to one another.

>But, with these remarks, I don't intend to criticize. You've presented an
>impressive piece of work and an admirable way of 'publishing' it. I will be
>using it and, though silently, thanking you for it!
Return to questions list.

22. Cuneiform Symbols in Sumerian Lexicon?

>I have downloaded you Sumerian Lexicon as a Word for Windows 6.0 version. I
>am able to view the document, but cannot see cuneiform symbols. The symbols
>seem to appear as our regular alphabet but with various accent marks etc.
>
>I was able to load the TrueType Sumerian font into windows and I made sure
>that the template had a correct path to the Sumerian.dot file.

The Sumerian true type font is needed for specialized transliteration symbols, such as the g with the tilde over it and the h with the dish under it.

It would take many more than the 256 spaces available in a true type font to display cuneiform.

[Return to questions list.](#)

23. Poetry to Woo a Sumerian Girl?

> Dear John, What a beginning, eh? Without great ignorance, I've just
>begun a relationship with a beautiful, young Sumerian girl and would love
>to show some devotion to her heritage. I wished to make a prose in her
>native language (I, obviously have no idea of the Sumerian tongue) and
>ventured into your site. I (honestly) was looking for a quick fix, but am
>willing to make the grade. Without getting into ancient texts, is there
>any such poetry I may find upon the net or in the local library, which
>will include beautiful prose? I ask this in all humble nature.

She is putting you on.

There have been no Sumerians for almost 4,000 years.
[Return to questions list.](#)

24. Translate Sumerian Alphabet?

>hello, i need to translate the sumerian
>alphabet to english alphabet letter please help me .

The Greeks invented the alphabet long after Sumerian had ceased to be a living language. Sumerian writing did not use an alphabet. Sumerian writing started with pictographs and progressed to ideographs and logographs.
[Return to questions list.](#)

25. Letters of Sumerian Alphabet?

> Can you give me the main letters of the alphabet? Thanks, this is for a
>project.

The Sumerians did not have an alphabet. They wrote with pictograms in a manner similar to the Chinese.

At my links page you will find a link to the Signs of Old Sumerian.
Return to questions list.

26. Importance of Sumerian Invention of Cuneiform Writing

>1. Do you think the invention of Sumerian Cuneiform was a major turning point
>in history? Why?

Yes, for the same reasons that A&E; Biography put Gutenberg at the top of its list of the most important 100 people of the last millenium.

>2. How was Sumerian cuneiform a big influence and building block for the written
>language over time?

Writing on clay was an inexpensive yet permanent way of recording transactions. The fact that the Sumerians shared their land with Semitic-speaking Akkadians was important because the Akkadians had to turn the Sumerian logographic writing into phonetic syllabic writing in order to use cuneiform to represent phonetically the spoken words of the Akkadian language.

>3. How was Sumerian cuneiform tracked through other cultures as they developed
>their own written language?

The cultural influence of the Sumerians upon later Mesopotamian peoples was enormous. Cuneiform writing has been found at Amarna in Egypt, in the form of an alphabet at Ugarit, and among the Hittites who used it to render their own Indo-European language.

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27. Sumer, Not Sumeria

>Thank you for the proverbs and the cuneiform writing. I teach 6th grade
>social studies and we are presently doing Sumeria. This was interesting to
>read and I will share the site with my students.

Thank you. You will help your students by teaching them that the country is called Sumer, not Sumeria.

Return to questions list.

28. Could Sumerian "ur" Mean Ox or Cow?

>I'm very much interested in things Sumerian and enjoying your Sumerian
>Language page.
>Your page suggests that the word Ur means dog or other carnivorous
>animal. The other day, I enjoyed talking with Mr. [snip], who is a
>friendly acquaintance of mine and also a writer, He insisted that the
>Sumerian word Ur means ox or cow according to his own source. I insisted
>the word definitely denotes dog !! So, I would appreciate it if you
>would give me a kind explanation which is right. Is there any
>possibility that the word means ox or cow ? He is now planning to write
>on Sumer and other ancient civilizations, and he also would like to know
>the true meaning of the word. Please help him !! Thank you very much for
>your kind advice in advance.

There is no possibility that ur means ox or cow.

Previously, there was no complete modern lexicon of Sumerian available, so it was possible for proponents of different theories relating Sumerian to this or that language family to quote mangled definitions of Sumerian words and no one would know any better.

Return to questions list.

29. Pronunciation and Meaning of Sumerian Words

>I have a question for you; I am a student of languages interested in
>Sumerian. How do people who translate Sumerian cuneiform know how the
>words were pronounced?

Certain Sumerian cuneiform signs began to be used to represent phonetic syllables in order to write the unrelated Akkadian language, whose pronunciation is known from being a member of the Semitic language family. We have a lot of phonetically written Akkadian starting from the time of Sargon the Great (2300 B.C.). These phonetic syllable signs also occur as glosses indicating the pronunciation of Sumerian words in the lexical lists from the Old Babylonian period. This gives us the pronunciation of most Sumerian words. Admittedly the 20th century saw scholars revise their initial pronunciation of some signs and names, a situation that was not helped by the polyphony of many Sumerian ideographs. To the extent that Sumerian uses the same sounds as Semitic Akkadian, then, we know how Sumerian was pronounced. Some texts use syllabic spelling, instead of logograms, for Sumerian words. Words and names with unusual sounds that were in Sumerian but not in the Semitic Akkadian language can have variant spellings both in Akkadian texts and in texts written in other languages; these variants have given us clues to the nature of the non-Semitic sounds in Sumerian.

>For that matter, how do you know what the words
>mean besides referring to Sumerian/Assyrian bilingual dictionaries?

In fact, bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian dictionaries and bilingual religious hymns are the most important source for arriving at the meaning of Sumerian words. But sometimes the scholar who studies enough tablets, such as the accounting tablets, learns in a more precise way to what a particular term refers, since the corresponding term in Akkadian may be very general.

Return to questions list.

30. Is Sumerian the Earliest Written Language?

>i am doing some research, and was wondering if you knew of the earliest known
>written language. is there anything known to exist before the egyptians,
>sumerians, or mesopotamians?

The Sumerians were the first to write spoken language.

The report that writing in Egypt is older than in Sumer is based on archaeologists in Egypt who use calibrated Carbon-14 dating, whereas Sumerologists are a conservative lot who keep quoting the conventional 3100 B.C. date for the invention of writing, when it should be 3400 B.C. according to calibrated C-14 dates.

The last major overview dealing with Mesopotamia as a whole that I know of which collected the various calibrated C-14 dates was that by Mellaart in *Antiquity* 53 (1979), with important comments in *Antiquity* 54 (1980) - these comments acknowledged that the extremely high Mesopotamian chronology that resulted should be reduced by an average 100 years due to calibrated dates for wood/timber being too high by that average. The end result was still to support a high chronology rather than a middle chronology, especially for the transition between Uruk IV and Uruk III (AKA Jemdet Nasr). This transition appears to have occurred around 3300 BC using calibrated dates with the 100 year reduction.

You will also find pictures and discussion of a repertoire of symbols in Marija Gimbutas' publications on 'Old Europe', predating Sumerian. But the Vinca culture 'writing' appears more to have been tribal or family heraldic emblems like tatoos, found engraved on pots, with no indication that it represented the words of spoken language.

For so-called writing before the Sumerians, check out works by Alexander Marshack on calendar type markings (Stone Age Europe) and Marija Gimbutas on the Vinca culture writing (Neolithic Europe). Despite such precursors though, it is clear that Sumerian writing was the first in which there was a correspondence between the words of the spoken language and the written symbols.

Return to questions list.

31. Preflood Mythology - Ziusudra, the Sumerian Noah

>Could you give me any information on sumerian mythology relating to preflood

>times on the earth. This would be of great help to me. Thank you very much.

A search at <http://www.google.com> for Ziusudra turns up 1,420 documents.
Return to questions list.

32. How to Interpret "dirig-...-she"?

>i am very interested about the sumerian language, i
>have been reading the Sumerian Lexicon and much other sumerian
>related-topics. Now, i was wondering if you could fill a doubt of mine. In
>the lexicon i read the sumerian word for "beyond" is "dirig-...-se" , and i
>do not understand what the middle space with
>the 3 points means. If it isn't much trouble could you explain me why is
>that or give me another sumerian word for "beyond".

The dots substitute for the noun that is there in actual speech. So if you say, dirig-kur-s^e, you are saying 'beyond those mountains'. The kur-s^e in this case indicates 'those mountains there within view', so the speaker says 'exceeding or greater than those mountains there'.

Return to questions list.

33. The Planet Nibiru

>I am writing a paper on God, for a philosophy class. I am trying to prove
>that the creation story is a story about the birth of an individual, each and
>every one of us are our own God. I have read all of Zecharia Sitchin's books
>and believe that what he wrote could be true, but I believe that the physical
>world is only a reflection of our collective inner or spiritual world. I am
>curious of how you would translate - Nibiru. I have used your dictionary and
>some other ones and Sitchin translates it as "The Planet of crossing". I get
>the planet or body part but not the crossing. I think that maybe it has
>something to do with a lessening of the physical to equal the spiritual.
>Could that be plausible?

The Sumerians were smart about ethical and practical concerns, but I don't think that they were as abstract as you are being. Neberu is an Akkadian word, not a Sumerian word. It referred to a river crossing, ford, or a ferry (boat). The city of Nippur was probably located at such a spot. The planet Jupiter, which we know was later called Neberu, belonged to the chief deity in the Babylonian pantheon, Marduk. We don't have proof, but earlier it may have belonged to the Sumerian Enlil, the temple god of Nippur and chief deity in the Sumerian pantheon. There is a possibility that Neberu also referred to the North Star. The Sumerians tended to project what they knew on earth onto the heavens.

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34. Zechariah Sitchin and Extraterrestrials

>I am attempting to find an expert in the Sumerian language who can
>verify or debunk Zechariah Sitchin's claims of Sumerian translation. As
>far as I can tell, no one with a scholarly and reputable background has
>ever verified or denied his claims.

>His eight books on the subject of the Annunaki have gone unchallenged
>for years. If you are unfamiliar with his works, it is his contention
>that sumerian texts verify that the human race was genetically altered
>to service a superior extraterrestrial race called the annunaki.

>Can you verify or refute these claims?

>Thank you for your attention to this matter.

I am very familiar with the Sumerian language and culture. There is nothing
extraterrestrial about it.
Return to questions list.

35. Name of Sumerian Religion?

>what was the name of the sumerian religion

You mean, like Southern Baptists or Roman Catholics?

The Sumerians did not have a word for religion, because worshipping the gods at their
temples was basic to their existence.

As you can imagine, it is difficult to have a name for their religion, when they don't even
have a word for religion.
Return to questions list.

36. The Sumerian People

>I would like to ask you a question concerning the sumerian people. First , were
>they indoeuropeen

I believe that the proto-Sumerian language predates the proto-Indoeuropean language.

> and second, were they blonde people with nordic white skin.

Probably not. They described themselves as the black-headed people and the book by
Cavalli-Sforza et al., The History and Geography of Human Genes, suggests that their
modern day descendants are the people of Kuwait.

Return to questions list.

37. Meaning of Sumer?

>I just wanted to know what the word Sumer itself means
>in the Sumerian language. Could you kindly let me know ?

It is not known why the Akkadians called the southern land Shumeru. The Sumerians called it ki-en-gir¹⁵ ('place of the civilized lords'). The etymology of the Akkadian term is unknown. It could possibly be a dialectal pronunciation of the Sumerian word kiengir. This possibility is suggested by the Emesal dialect form 'dimmer' for the word 'dingir'.
Return to questions list.

38. Sumerian Speech from Buffy the Vampire Slayer

>This is probably going to sound really strange to you, but ...

>I was watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer on TV and they said something
>in Sumerian. I wanted to know what they said so I hopped onto the net to
>see what I could find.

>I found someone else who was trying to find out what it meant and I found
>your dictionary site. I looked through your site, but wasn't too successful as
>I have no knowledge of the language at all. I was hoping you might be able
>to translate it for me.

>The other person who was trying to get a translation wrote the Sumerian
>as follows:

>Sha me-en-den

'we are heart'

>Gesh-toog me-en-den

'we are mind'

>Zee me-en-den

'we are spirit'

>Oo-kush-ta me-ool-lee-a ba-ab-tum-mu-de-en

'from the raging storm we bring the power of the primeval one'

>Im-a sheg-ab.

'heat/boil the wind'

Return to questions list.

39. Sumerian Planet Names

>Yesterday, I came across the following words which are supposed to

>be the Sumerian names of the planets:

>Udu-idim-gu-ud = Mercury

>Nin-si4-an-na = Venus

'lady of the rosy dawn'

>Si-mu-ud = Mars

'dark or bloody horns/rays' is the probable translation, but unlike the others, I don't recall actually seeing this term used. Can you tell me where this term occurs?

>Mul-sag-me-gar = Jupiter

sag-me = mesu II = 'cult, rites' and gar = 'to establish', but it is usually written SAG-ME-GAR to show that we are not sure of the pronunciation, because it was also a logogram for Neberu, which calls to mind Nippur, the Sumerian's cult center.

>Udu-idim-sag-us = Saturn

>Of these 'gu-ud' means of course 'gu4-ud' (=bull of sun) and 'sag-us' is

>of course 'sag-us2' (=steady star), 'mul' is 'star' but I'm not sure about the rest.

>Would you be so kind as to point out the correct rendering of the five words?

udu-idim is 'wild sheep'. We have no textual gloss or actual evidence that the signs were read this way, instead of udu-bad, which, meaning 'dead sheep', would refer to the planets as omens, but Benno Landsberger with his extensive knowledge of Sumerian deduced that this is the most probable reading.

From the other meanings of gu4-ud I would infer that the Sumerians themselves knew the planet Mercury, and I may have seen nin-si4-an-na in a Sumerian textual context, but the other names only occur in later contexts, so I don't know how early they were invented and applied.

Return to questions list.

40. Who Were the Sumerians?

>Is it possible that you could give more details concerning the Sumerians? Who

>are they? Where did they come from?

>I must admit that I have never heard of this race and I am eager to learn more.

There are some excellent books out there. My favorite introduction is by Samuel Noah Kramer, called *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-Nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History*.
Return to questions list.

41. Annotated Version of Lexicon?

> I've just had a look at your site. It's a very impressive compilation.
>I'm wondering whether you have produced an annotated version of your
>lexicon, with references to the source-bibliography you list on your page?
>Such a version would be a very useful tool for scholarship. I'd be very
>interested to know whether one is in development or currently available.

No, that would have taken twice as long. If you look at Santag 5, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, it doesn't have such references either.

The searchable PSD index has most of the source references. And it is very helpful how it now indexes all of the Sumerian references in the AHw. After you trace down all the PSD index references for a word, though, don't be surprised if you end up with basically the same range of meanings that are given in my version 3 lexicon.
Return to questions list.

42. Origin of Picture of Counting Tokens

>I would like to use the pictures of the counting tokens that you used in your
>site (<http://www.sumerian.org/tokens.htm>) in a piece that I'm working on.
>
>Since I need to print what I'm designing, I need higher resolution pictures.
>Could you please do me the favor of telling me where you got the originals?
>Do you own them or high res. versions of them?

I paid the Louvre museum for black and white photographs back in the 1980s. I am not sure where the package with that photograph is right now.

I went through a library department at UC Berkeley that obtains things like that - you could do the same.
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43. Another Translation into Sumerian

>I've been doing this project where I've been translating the song Twiggy
>Twiggy into any language I can. I was trying to use your dictionary to make a
>Sumerian version but I'm not finding all the words I need and I think there
>may be tricks to it that I'm not aware of. The first 2 lines came out "ñe za

>es dana/ni ñe gul-lum" (I waited three hours/along with my cat) and then the
>next line I couldn't do because there doesn't seem to be a word that means
>'wearing'. If you're interested in helping with a translation, the song goes:

>

>I waited for three hours along with my cat

es danna-am3 su-a-gu10-da mu-da-tush

Return to questions list.

44. Vowels in Sumerian Writing?

>Did the sumerians have vowels in their writings?

Yes. Some of the Sumerian ideograms gradually became used as syllabograms, which included the vowel indications.

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45. Did Sumerian Have Vowel Harmony?

> In your opinion, is that possible that the sumerians had vowel harmony
>in their language?

Very definitely the Sumerians had vowel harmony.

Here is the entry for zabar, the Sumerian word for the metal bronze.

zabar[UD.KA.BAR]: bronze (zil; zi; zé, 'to pare, cut', + bar6, 'bright, white'; Akk. siparrum, 'bronze' borrowed before vowel harmony changed Sumerian word; cf., barzil, 'iron') [ZABAR archaic frequency: 1].

It shows the transformation zilbar > zibar > zabar.

According to David Crystal's Dictionary of Language and Languages, Turkish and Hungarian are examples of languages that display harmony as a systematic feature of their sound system.

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46. Sumerians Live During or Before the Time of Biblical Moses?

>I am interested to know if Sumerian were exist as a people either during the
>time of Moses or before?

The Sumerians flourished before the time of Moses, who lived in the middle of the second millenium B.C.E.

The Sumerian language ceased to be spoken before the time of Moses.

In the book of Genesis 11:2, the Bible sets the story of the tower of Babel in the land of Shinar, which is how the Hebrews wrote Sumer. Shinar is also briefly mentioned in the Bible at Genesis 14:1, Isaiah 11:11, Zechariah 5:11, and Daniel 1:2.

In Genesis 11:28-31, the Bible describes how Abraham, the putative ancestor of Moses and all Hebrews, was a native of the Sumerian city of Ur.
Return to questions list.

47. Different Dialects? - Text Partially in Sumerian

>I was wondering whether or not there were different dialects to Sumerian?
>I have read what I thought to be some Sumerian text and a lot of the words that
>I was interested in translating into English are not found in your lexicon and others.

>"DINGIR UD KALAMA SINIKU"

The first three words are Sumerian ideograms, and the fourth word is Akkadian. So it is Akkadian and the reader would have substituted the Akkadian words for the Sumerian ideograms, such as elu shamash matu, god sun land. I don't know Akkadian that well, but sanaku means 'to come near, approach'. The Sun god approached the land ?

There is the EME-SAL dialect, or women's dialect, which has some vocabulary that is different from the standard EME-GIR dialect that is in my lexicon. Thomsen includes a list of eme-sal vocabulary in her Sumerian Language book.
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48. Where Does One Learn Sumerian?

>How's it going? I know this is a long shot, but do you know of any school or
>place that teaches one how to speak Sumerian? Thanks for your time.

Where do you live?

You can search the e-mail addresses of Assyriologists - I have a link to them at my links page. See at what universities they teach.
Return to questions list.

49. What is the Relation of Sumerian to Other Language Families?

>I have a question: is Sumerian related with the Ural Altaic languages,
>or with the Indo European languages?
>
>Doesn't there exist any relation between Sumerian and the semitic

>language family?

There appears to be some slight relation between Sumerian and both Ural-Altaic and Indo-European. This may just be due to having evolved in the same northeast Fertile Crescent linguistic area.

I don't see any connection at all between Sumerian and Semitic.
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50. Sumerian Money

>During my rather cursory examination of your impressive
>work, I ran across several terms which could be construed
>as economic units of measure; gur, a unit of volume roughly
>equal to 26 bushels, kug or ku, silver or money, and gin or
>gig, a small axe head used as money roughly equal to a shekel.
>Did the Sumerians have a common unit of economic exchange
>@ 2400 to 2300 BC and, if so, what was it?

Our documentation is much better for the Ur III period starting 2100 BC than for the Old Sumerian Ur II, Girsu/Lagash/Adab period that you mention. From the Ur III period we have tablets from different places and times that give the silver equivalents of different quantities of different commodities. For the period that you mention, I know that there were standardized weights and measures, although they were slightly different from the later period.

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51. The Greatest Sumerian Ruler?

>i am a current student in 9th grade. i am doing an in depth research paper.
>and i was wondering if u knew who the greatest ruler was of the sumerians?????

That would probably be King Shulgi of the Third Dynasty of Ur. He reigned for 47 years during a time of great prosperity, from 2094 to 2047 B.C.

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52. Vinca Culture Writing - Tartaria Tablets in Romania

>What explanation can be given to the fact that three clay tablets
>containing sumerian pictographs made with local clay , but 1000 years
>older than the oldest tablets found in Mesopotamia , are found in a region
>where the surrounding cities have sumerian names , URASTIE ,
>SIMERIA ; KUGIR ? Is it possible that sumerian groups have migrated
>as far north as the western Rumania ?

It probably was the case that some early Sumerian-speakers from the Samarra culture made their way north instead of south.

The words that you quote do use the same combination of consonants and vowels as Sumerian, but I would also see if you can derive them from simpler Sumerian words, as is possible with the actual Sumerian lexicon.

Have you visited Fred Hamori's web site which makes many comparisons of Sumerian to Uralic and Altaic vocabulary? There is a link to it near the bottom of my mesopotamian links.

Do dictionaries of Romanian include scholarly etymologies for the words, as dictionaries of English do?

I am familiar with the Vinca culture 'writing', discussed by Marija Gimbutas in her books and the subject of a 1973 UCLA doctoral dissertation by Milton McChesney Winn. There were about 200 symbols used by the Southeast Europe Chalcolithic civilization. But just like the Indus culture script, they mainly occur on pottery. Personally, I believe that they are heraldic family emblems, and not attempts to render speech in written signs. They are not the same as Sumerian writing.

> Yes , the Tartaria tablets are included in the "Vinca" culture , and I
>am familiar with Maria Gimbutas remarkable work , but I have to disagree
>with your conclusion that those three clay tablets "are not sumerian writing" .
> I cannot explain the similarities , but the facts are that they contain
>pictograms absolutely identical with those found in Djemet-Nasr , they
>are carbon dated 1000 years before , and are made of local clay . And
>they definitely are clay tablets , no doubt about it , found in a burial place ,
>and very distinct from the more common pottery symbols found
>throughout southeastern Europe , both in function and in form .
> The problem is that the inclusion of just these three tablets in the
>"Vinca" culture seems , graphically , forced by the
>lack of a better explanation , yet another problem being the evident
>isolation and distant placement of the tablets from
>the rest (if they indeed belong to a proto-mediterranean culture ,
>more widespread than it is ascertained today) .

I wrote to an expert on the Jemdet Nasr script. He responded regarding the Tartaria tablets, "There are some graphic similarities, but not so many really, so a discussion of these tablets is not time well spent."

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53. Sumerian Determinatives

> Hello, Mr Halloran. I am in the process of comparing Egyptian and

>Sumerian determinatives. I found an Internet source for Egyptian
>determinatives. Could you please inform me of any Internet (or otherwise)
>source for Sumerian determinatives?

There is actually a decent list of determinatives at the Akkadian web site that is at the top of my links list.

However, the most complete list that I know of is on pages 152-153 of an inexpensive paperback book from Eisenbrauns by Douglas B. Miller and R. Mark Shipp, An Akkadian Handbook.

See also 60. Determinative Before Month Names

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54. Sumerian Vocabulary from a Woman's Viewpoint

>BTW also, I had a little trouble with your definition of the "l" sound. You
>stated "tireless producers of abundance, males". (?) That confuses me. I
>thought the producers were always the females, and the supervisors were the
>males.

You have to look at what are the actual Sumerian words that have just this one consonant. E.g.,

la: abundance, luxury, wealth; youthful freshness and beauty; bliss, happiness; wish, desire [LA archaic frequency: 20; concatenates 4 sign variants].

lá: to penetrate, pierce, force a way into (in order to see); to know; to look after; to have a beard (cf. also, la) [LA2 archaic frequency: 57].

lu: n., many, much; man, men, people; sheep.

v., to be/make numerous, abundant; to multiply; to mix; to graze, pasture (reduplication class [?]) (cf., lug).

lú: grown man; male; human being; someone, anyone, no one; gentleman [LU2 archaic frequency: 85].

lù: to disturb, agitate, trouble; to fluster, embarrass; to stir, blend.

Males are associated with providing abundance and wealth from the woman's point of view. Don't these associations appear to be from a woman's point of view?

I think that a group of women were the original inventors of the Sumerian language. Although it seems like a big deal to us now, when they started it probably seemed to them like they were just playing an exciting new game, assigning different vowels and consonants as an abstract shorthand for things in their world.

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55. Sumerian Words in CAPITAL Letters

>BTW, what's the difference between the word you give a definition to, and the
>words that are in brackets with capital letters and periods between syllables
>after the word?

That's a reasonable question. The names in capital letters refer to the particular cuneiform sign, without prejudging how the sign is pronounced. That is the name that Assyriologists have given to the inscribed sign - usually its most common pronunciation.

One sign may have several lower-case pronunciations, each of which is a separate word in the spoken language lexicon.

The periods separate different signs. Sometimes one word in the spoken language is represented by multiple written signs.

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56. English to Sumerian Dictionary?

>I am presently studying Sumerian, and have been using the lexicon on your
>website. Do you have, or know where I can find a complete
>English-to-Sumerian/Akkadian dictionary, the opposite way around from yours?

Just download the lexicon in Word for Windows form and use Word's find function to find a particular English word. Or get the Adobe Acrobat Reader with Search and use that with the PDF file.

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57. Sumerian Origins

>Do you think Sumerians are native of Southern Iraq ?
>I dont think so, I think they colonized the UBAIDIAN people.

Why do you think that?

Archaeologists are now saying that Choga Mami ware is transitional between Samarra pottery and Ubaid pottery. This agrees with my belief that mastery of irrigation agriculture is what marked the Sumerians, that they moved down from the middle of Mesopotamia, site of the Samarra culture. The simplest words of Sumerian include words for dikes and channels.

>What do you think of their look ? they looked like mongols ?

Is that the main reason for your opinion about the Sumerians as late colonizers? What do you think, that the Sumerians came in on horseback? Their language is farming-

oriented, not warfare-oriented.

The History and Geography of Human Genes by Cavalli-Sforza et al. finds distinctive genes in Kuwait and speculates that Kuwaitis are the genetic descendants of the Sumerians.

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58. Out-of-Print Jacobsen Book

>I am looking for an out of print book by Jacobsen. Title: Toward an Image
>of Tammuz and other Essays.
>Do you have any information on how to buy a copy.

I have only seen that out-of-print book in libraries. I don't own a copy. It is an excellent book, full of Thorkild Jacobsen's scholarly articles.

If your local university library does not have it, I would visit the Interlibrary Loan Department of your local public library. They can get it for you and then you can photocopy what interests you. This advice applies to getting any out-of-print book.
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59. 'I Love You' in Sumerian

>I am trying to find out how to spell "I Love You" as a man would say to a
>woman in the following languages but I'm having great difficulty with it.
>
>Sumerian

In Sumerian, you would say, za.e ki-ag2-gu10, which translates as "you are my beloved"

It would be pronounced, ze ki angu, where ang is as in English bong or dong.
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60. Determinative Before Month Names

>You have worked with this and the notations extensively. They are familiar
>to you, but I need a little clarification.
>
>One entry was as follows ...
>
>iti^(superscripted)BARA-ZA-GAR -- calendar month 1 at Nippur during Ur III.
>Note that the example you provided above also included the "iti".
>
>I was scanning for the word 'month' in the document and each instance
>(at least up to the B's) contained the above superscript. What is its

>significance? Is it a reference to an article word (such as 'the') that
>separates or indicates that the word following is to mean a 'month' and not
>one of the other possible meanings?

itud, itid, itu, iti, id8; it4, id4: moon; month; moonlight (i3-, 'impersonal verbal conjugation prefix', + tud, 'to give birth; to be born, reborn').

Yes, certain Sumerian words are written before the noun or name as a 'determinative', such as dingir being written before divine names or lu2 being written before male profession names. iti is the determinative written before month names, so that the reader will know that the sign(s) that follow refer to a month. It is thought that determinatives were not pronounced in speech, but only appear in writing.

>The definitional references to the month number and city location and
>historic time period I understand. Is the purpose for providing the reference
>locations and timings to identify 'where' the particular word for the month
>has been encountered written down on a clay tablet?

No. As you may notice in the example, the same month name can refer to a different month depending on the city and period. So this information is provided so that the translator who knows where his tablet is from will know which number of month is referenced.

>In your studies, have any of the months seemed to be numbered, or the
>words that appear to be names of months intimate a numbering sequence?
> Example: the language root for the name of month X is the same as
>number X (numbers 1 through 12 or 13 only) even though the complete
>spellings end up as different.

No, I have not seen numerical Sumerian month names. They are usually the names of seasonal festivals that took place in that month.

Return to questions list.

61. Sumerian Words in Akkadian and Hebrew

>As a linguist, a translator with a excellent background in Hebrew, I found
>your monograph utterly fascinating! I can see myself among those people,
>beginning to see things differently that they seem, trying to express my feeling,
>and pronouncing some vowels and consonants Like in a dream, you are
>trying to speak and words don't come out, or you speak a language, which
>you think is, say, German, but it is not

>

>Several words, or sounds, as you are certainly aware, have lived through the
>millenia and entered into Semitic languages, like "uz", a goat, the same as in
>Hebrew, or even "ga" milk, "khalav" in Hebrew, and "gala" in Greek. I was

>surprised, though, that "ur," does not appear to mean "city" or "town,"
>as in Chaldean and old Hebrew.

That would be:

uru(2)(ki), iri, ri2; iri1 1: city, town, village, district [URU archaic frequency: 101;
concatenation of 5 sign variants; UNUG archaic frequency: 206; concatenates 3 sign
variants].

which relates to:

uru3(-m)[ŠEŠ]: n., watch fire; light; glowing, luminous object.
v., to watch, guard; to protect.

As for broad-based connections between Sumerian and Afro-Asiatic, I don't see them.

I can see how the Sumerians created their vocabulary, and in M.L. Foster's article
referenced in the footnotes to my Proto-Sumerian paper she appears to show how the
Indo-Europeans created their vocabulary, but I don't know if anyone has determined the
logic or pattern according to which the first Afro-Asiatic speakers created the words of
their vocabulary.

Postscript: See now the salient.pdf abstract by the late L.O. Schuman at
<http://people.zeelandnet.nl/treesello/>.

This abstract of an unpublished manuscript has a very deep analysis of the Semitic and
'Afro-Asiatic' word creation process. If anyone reading this ordered Schuman's 356-page
manuscript during the year that he offered it before dying in September, 2005, please
write to me.

Return to questions list.

62. Teachings of Suruppak to His Son Ziusudra

>Sir, according to the book "ATRA-HASIS: The Babylonian
>Story of the Flood by Lambert & Millard, pg 19...
>"A literary work, of which copies contemporary with
>those of the King List are extant, professes to be the
>teaching of Suruppak to his son Ziusudra. It consists
>of admonitions of a quite general kind..."
>I'd like to find this record. Do you have any idea of
>where this came from. I found no references in the
>book to locate this.

The bibliography for the Sumerian lexicon at my web site includes the following:

B. Alster, The Instructions of Suruppak: A Sumerian Proverb Collection (Mesopotamia:

Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology, Vol. 2); Copenhagen 1974.
Return to questions list.

63. Sumerian Freedom Tattoo

- >I recently got the following tattoo on my left shoulder (see the attachment).
- >According to a company in the USA called Liberty Fund. Inc. This sign was a
- >Sumarian design motif for the word "freedom" (ama-gi).
- >
- >Do you know anything about these motifs and if it actually is Sumarian?
- >Would it be correct to say it was carved in a wall about 2000 BC?

Your information is correct. The term ama(-ar)-gi4 meaning 'freedom' is in my on-line lexicon. The jpg shows the transcribed signs ama and gi4 and yes they are in a form appropriate to 2000 B.C.

- >Do you have any idea where this motif was found? If you don't know, maybe
- >you know somebody who does.

It is not a motif. It is a word that the Sumerians used both in speech and in writing.

The jpg that you sent shows a transcription by a modern scholar. It does not show the actual ancient tablet or inscription that the scholar was looking at. The scholar used an ink pen to make that transcription. The Sumerians used reed styluses to make impressions in clay, so their tablets actually look quite different and are not as easy to read as is a modern scholar's transcription.

Return to questions list.

64. Age/Location of Sumerian Vocabulary

- >In relation to your Sumerian Lexicon 3.0, I'd need to
- >know of what age/location is it.

It would be nice if the lexicon indicated the provenance for which particular words and meanings are attested, but I am just one person and did not have the time to do that. The majority of our texts are from the Ur III and Old Babylonian periods.
Return to questions list.

65. Hungarian Roots

- > after examining your site of Sumerian expressions, would like to ask
- >you a question: ever heard of Dr Sándor Nagy? Specifically referring to
- >his publication of "The Forgotten Cradle of the Hungarian Culture";
- >(translated by László and Margaret Botos); Patria Publishing Co. Ltd.,
- >Toronto, Canada 1973.

>
> In that book he promotes the idea that Hungarian language is a
>'descendant' of the Sumerian folks who populated the Danube basin prior
>to the Magyar conquest in the 9th century. Would appreciate your
>opinion.
>
> I'm supporting a genealogy list of Magyar descendants who are
>searching for their roots (speak, read and write Hungarian) and one of
>the list member sent me samples of Dr. Nagy's book, which I did not read
>- except a few pages - so far.

If you look at the map at my web site, you will see that trade routes head north from the Samarra culture sites. Hungarian does appear to share some simple vocabulary, but not the more complex words. Check out Fred Hamori's web page on Ural-Altaic language connections, on my links page, towards the bottom of the Mesopotamia links.
Return to questions list.

66. Dilmun, Lemuria, and Sumer

> I have recently purchased the book, "Looking for Dilmun"

Is that by Geoffrey Bibby? If so, that's a great book. I read that a long time ago.

> and while reading it I came across info. on Sumeria

A lot of people who should know better call it that. The correct name is Sumer.

>....it brought back a book I read
>as a young girl...I can't recall the name of it but it intrigued me even
>back then...I'm sure it was already out of print, I borrowed it and its
>owner was adamant about its return...the book was about an ancient
>civilization, I think Sumeria....although also went by another name as I
>recall...people could communicate by thought and wrote tablets...I think I
>recall people thought it was the lost Atlantis at one time...

You are probably thinking about books regarding the hypothetical civilization of Mu or Lemuria, by Col. James Churchward. I read those books too when I was a kid. Of course, there is no place in actual human history for such a civilization. The only recent discovery that could possibly support the disappearance of such a civilization would be the discovery of the caldera volcano of Toba which erupted around 70,000 B.C.
Return to questions list.

67. Need Background for Novel that I Am Writing

>Thank you very much for answering me. Well, the thing is that my novel

- >starts in the first part of the summerian civilization, I mean even before
- >Sargon I and the other ones.
- >
- >I speak about several aspects about religion. I already know that they
- >didn't believe in a life after death, or inclusive that this "life" was
- >really dark when dead. I want to know the name of the ancient gods, and
- >specific aspects about their believings in how was suppose to be the life
- >after death.
- >
- >Also if it possible to know some things about the first important cities in
- >summerian civilization, how were suppose to be the houses, the palaces, the
- >FOOD, or ANY domestic aspect, I will be VERY VERY pleased.

I am sorry. I am used to answering more specific questions than this. I cannot do the job of educating you.

I suggest that you order and study a 1998 novel, *Between the Rivers*, by Harry Turtledove. This author already did the background research that you describe and it fills his book.

Return to questions list.

68. Disputing the Etymology of the Sumerian Word for 'Breast'

- > Hi: I have looked at your Proto-Sumerian Language Invention Process
- >web-site again to see what elements would comprise compound words. The
- >first word in the list is gaba 'breast' (ga 'milk' + ba 'to give'). It is
- >not my intention to dispute the phonetic form and its meaning because
- >'milk' can be semantically connected with women's breast and ga + ba seems
- >to be a convincing combination at first glance. But it isn't so evident if
- >one looks at the cuneiform signs of ga, ba and gaba. Neither ga or ba can
- >be detected in the cuneiform sign of gaba which appears to be a unique
- >individual sign by itself.

The spoken words were invented long before the written signs. The inventors of the written signs had learned the spoken words as unbroken phonemic sequences which were no longer analyzed into components.

- > Could it possibly be that gaba was a neutral
- >word used both for men and women?

Yes, that is what the word became.

- > In that case milk would have nothing to
- >do with the appellation, it simply meant part of the human body we call
- >'chest'. This would be confirmed by the Hungarian kebel 'chest' and old

>Turkish gogoz 'chest'. Each o in the Turkish word is marked with dieresis.
>A possible common source for the roots gab, keb and gog may not be too
>difficult to find. The Sumerian gab is present in the Hungarian male
>forenames Gabi and Gabor, also in the surname Kabos (old form Kaba), which
>denote barrel-chested individuals. Thus the -a in the Sumerian gaba may be
>a suffix that forms adjectives. (Both -a and -os are adjectival suffixes in
>the Hungarian language).

Are there regular sound-change rules that connect Hungarian 'kebel' with Turkish 'gogoz'? For the root of the Hungarian words, note the root 'kopa II' meaning 'lungs' in Gyula Decsy's book *The Uralic Protolanguage: A Comprehensive Reconstruction*, Eurolingua, Bloomington, 1990. Turkish belongs to the Altaic language family.

The suffix -a forms nouns or participial phrases in Sumerian, so applying your logic, the breast or chest would be the thing that gabs, although Sumerian has no such verb, having hab, 'to stink', and gub, 'to stand'.

Personally, I think that the vocabulary of Sumerian is older and more conservative than the vocabulary of Hungarian or Turkish. This would mean that some Hungarian vocabulary could have evolved from an early form of Sumerian. Studies of the rates of lexical change have found that the vocabulary of farming cultures is especially conservative and resistant to change.

> It would be interesting to find out if the
>'milk' + 'to give' logic was applied by the Sumerians for 'udder'. They
>were engaged in animal husbandry, therefore, must have had a word for it.

ubur: female breast, teat (ub4, 'cavity', + ir(2), 'liquid secretion').
Return to questions list.

69. Symbols for Mesopotamian Gods?

>I have been trying to find all the symbols for the different gods in
>Mesopotamia. I have only found one version of Anu, and I am not sure if
>it is correct. Do you know of anywhere I might be able to get this
>information?

I suggest the paperback book:

Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia by Black and Green.
Return to questions list.

70. Sumerian and Babylonian Holy Days

>I am a Pastor seeking information on Sumerian and Babylonian

>worship and ceremonies. - Do we have any knowledge of the
 >actual ceremonies, the sights and sounds that would meet a visitor to an
 >ancient temple in Sumer and Babylon?
 >
 >Especially I am trying to find information on the Shapatu, the holy day
 >in the middle of every month in the Sumerian and/or Babylonian lunar
 >calendar. According to my lexicon, it is the origin of the Hebrew Sabbath.
 >I would like to find out as much as I can about what deity was attached to
 >this date, and what ceremonies and rituals were performed.
 >
 >I do not expect you to send me a lengthy thesis on this. But a hip shot
 >answer from whatever knowledge you may possess would be of great help.
 >Plus of course a possible reference to written sources on the subject.

Here is an entry in the recent book, A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian.

shapattu(m), shabattu "15th day of month" Oakk, Bab., OA [UD.15.KAM]; also "period of 15 days, fortnight"

The books that you might examine include:

Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendar, by Stephen Langdon
 Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East, by Mark E. Cohen
 Return to questions list.

71. Yet Another Translation into Sumerian

>The reason I'm emailing is with a somewhat lighthearted
 >research question. I was assigned to write a story about a cat's
 >travels through various underworlds and afterlives. In the story, the
 >cat is cast out of each underworld and into the next by being told,
 >"Go to hell!"
 >
 >He makes a visit to a Sumerian netherworld, and is told (after
 >wreaking some typically feline destruction), "Go to hell!" So my
 >question is...how can we represent that statement in Sumerian?
 >
 >A quick troll through your paper "The Proto-Sumerian Language
 >Invention Process" yields "urugal" (the netherworld) and a couple of
 >verb possibilities (éd, è; i and èd, e11), but I am completely stumped
 >as to conjugations and declensions, and whether there are any
 >prepositional equivalents.

You could use:

urugal-ce3 ba-ra-ed3

where c can be transcribed as sh and you can drop the logogram numbers.
Return to questions list.

72. Permission to Use Tokens Picture

> Hello John:
> I would like to use your picture of sumerian tokens for an article that I
> am submitting to [snip]. I am not getting any money for it, and
> plan to put your copyright notice on the figure caption along with your
> name. Sound OK?

The Louvre museum sold me permission to use that photograph about 15 years ago. I think that they retain the rights to it.
Return to questions list.

73. How Did Writing Start?

> Intuitively, I imagine that the first kind of written language was
> pictographic, and that at some point there was a breakthrough in the
> discovery of a way of notating the sounds of words. This must sound crude
> and laughable to you, given the depth and specialty of your work, however I
> am genuinely interested in this, and I want to start with an overview of
> written language development worldwide before digging in deeper
> Can you help?

At an on-line bookseller look either for a book by Denise Schmandt-Besserat or for a book by Robert Englund and Hans Nissen.
Return to questions list.

74. Books to Study Day-to-Day Life of Sumerians?

> For the past 6 months I have gathered internet
> resources, as far as the Sumerian language is
> concerned, and wish to know what books you would
> suggest for further reading. Due to circumstances, I
> do not have the resources to study at college, but
> wish to know more about the field of anthropology -
> primarily linguistic and cultural. I know of a few
> books that would be helpful, but would like to know
> more about the grammatical structure and day to day
> lives of these people. I would sincerely appreciate
> any information you would have to offer.

You need to get the Thomsen and Hayes books on Sumerian that I sell - and would need those textbooks even if you did study Sumerian at a university.

As far as daily life is concerned, the best books, listed in order of detailed information, are:

D.T. Potts, Mesopotamian Civilization: The Material Foundations; Ithaca, New York 1997.

D.C. Snell, Ledgers and Prices: Early Mesopotamian Merchant Accounts; New Haven and London 1982.

D.C. Snell, Life in the Ancient Near East: 3100-332 B.C.E.; New Haven and London 1997.

Thorkild Jacobsen's writings contain much insightful cultural and linguistic speculation about the Sumerians.

Return to questions list.

75. Necronomicon; Learning Sumerian

>Hello. I'm merely 15 but I'm greatly intrigued with the Assyrians and Sumerians.

>This is concerning some Sumerian words from the Lexicon that I'd like to
>know about. You stated that Alal means water.....but in Necronomicon it
>says Alal means Destroyer. It confused me. Do you know much of anything
>about Necronomicon? It was written by Abdul Alhazred (The Mad Arab) in
>about the 8th century A.D. Anyway I'd like to know for sure if it had to do
>with the Sumerians or not and I figured you may know the answer to that
>as well. Is there any way I could buy tapes or books for learning all or
>a majority of the Sumerian language? Thanks for your time and patience.
>I hope to receive a reply. Until then.....Farewell and Blessed Be.....

My lexicon has alal as 'pipe for making libation offerings to the deceased'. In this way it is associated with death.

Are you sure that the Necronomicon is not a modern invention?

I would go to <http://www.google.com> and put in the search words Necronomicon and Author.

All I know about it is that it has attracted a number of people with an occult bent to learn Sumerian who would not otherwise. I don't personally own a copy of it.

A number of students of Sumerian are starting by ordering the John Hayes book that I sell from my web site.

>Alright I understand the whole thing about Alal being associated with Death now.

>
>I'm pretty sure that Necronomicon isn't a more common invention but I'll
>do a little more research to make sure. It says on the back cover that it was
>written in the 8th Century A.D. around the area of Damascus by Abdul Alhazred.
>
>Alhazred was known as a hermit who was very well learned for the times
>and bragged about knowing so many languages. He was a philosopher of sorts
>as well as an Astronomer.
>
>That's how I got into Sumerian.....was from Necronomicon. It started out
>that I decided I didn't entirely believe in Christianity and somehow I heard
>about Necronomicon and decided to buy it and check it out. It seemed to make
>more sense to me and I follow the beliefs but I haven't done any of the rituals
>or anything because I can't get the items needed. I still read on more religions
>though.

Return to questions list.

76. Sumerian Tenses?

>saw the site--does sumerian have tenses and if so are they past present
>future or something else

Sumerian had two sets of verbal forms, which the Akkadians called hamtu and maru, "quick, sudden" and "fat, slow".

Quoting from the Manual by John L. Hayes, "The difference in function between the two has been interpreted in various ways. It has been argued that the difference was one of tense (past ~ present/future); one of aspect (perfect ~ imperfect); one of Aktionsart (punctual ~ durative, and so on). An explanation in terms of aspect seems to fit the evidence best, and they will be called aspects here." p. 46.

Return to questions list.

77. Cuneiform Words?

>Does Your Website have any words in Cuneiform?

Only what you see on the Proverbs page.

Cuneiform refers to a type of writing, not to a language. In the Ancient Near East, different, unrelated languages such as Akkadian, Sumerian, Hittite, and Elamite were written in cuneiform writing.

Return to questions list.

78. Letters or Sounds Missing from Sumerian

>In studying your list of Sumerian words, the following letters
>seem to not be in their alphabet:
>c,f,j,o,q,v,w,x,y (although the "x" is there in a different font).
>Am I correct?

The Sumerians had a syllabary, not an alphabet. They may have had the o sound, but the Akkadians from whom we have our knowledge of Sumerian did not and represented it with the u sound.

You are basically correct about the Sumerians not using those sounds.
Return to questions list.

79. Sumerian Pictographic Writing

>I am looking for any information
>on the full Sumerian picture
>writing that they used around
>3000 bc. If you know of any
>websites or books that would
>help I'd appreciate it.

For information on proto-cuneiform pictographic writing, at my links page, click on Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative.

Also, if you have the patience for the pages to load or you are on a fast connection, check out the link to Old Sumerian Signs copied from Labat.

See also 11. Development of Cuneiform From Pictographs
Return to questions list.

80. History of Bookkeeping and Sumerian Term "shubati"

>Looking for information about the history of money resp.
>the history of bookkeeping, I discovered the interesting
>babylonian word "shubati", mentioned in a publication of
>'The Banking Law Journal'; What is money? by A. Mitchell
>Innes 1913 (*) . Innes translated 'shubati' as "received"
>It seems, that this expression 'shubati' appeared very often
>on babylonian clay tablets, used as records of economic
>transactions.
>
>I would kindly ask you: Could You let me know Your opinion
>resp. Your translation regarding the exact meaning of the word
>'shubati'?

This Sumerian term is well understood. You will find the verb in question in my Sumerian Lexicon in the compound words section under shu...ti, 'to receive'. shu means 'hand' and ti means 'to approach', so the compound means 'to receive'.

ba- is the simplest of the verbal prefixes, used when the subject is inanimate and/or non-agentive (intransitive).
Return to questions list.

81. Sumerian "danna" and Akkadian "beru"

>Why can't I find the word beru? Can the word ever signify a "day" or a
>"double-day"?

That is an Akkadian word. Look in the Sumerian Lexicon under danna in the DAN section. beru is the Akkadian equivalent, translated 'double-hour; league'. Never 'day' or 'double-day'.
Return to questions list.

82. Dilmun, Paradise, Bahrain, Eridu, Enki

> Thank you for your informative reply. My question pertains to
>Dilmun's location. Some records which you certainly know affirm that Dilmun
>is "30 beru away" from Mesopotamia itself. I have found reasons for
>believing that Dilmun was located in the East Indies, as Dr. Kalyanaraman
>argues in some detail in his Sarasvati site.

I had responded, "I know of no reason to doubt the traditional Sumerological identification of Dilmun as the island of Bahrain. You will find Dilmun, Magan, and Meluhha all referenced in my lexicon."

> You may be right, after all. But it is hard to believe that anyone would
>ever equate this region with Paradise.

If you want to research this further, the one thing that comes to mind is the Sumerian tradition of the antiquity of the city of Eridu (etymologically, 'city' + 'sweet, good; beautiful; favorable; pleasing; fresh (water)'). The god of Eridu, Enki, was the lord of the sweet underground waters for which Dilmun was renowned, according to Geoffrey Bibby in The Search for Dilmun. That tradition of Eridu's antiquity combines with the reputation of Enki as having been the Sumerian Prometheus, bringer of the arts of civilization to Sumer.

Perhaps the Sumerians saw Bahrain as Enki's natural home and hence as the mother land for Sumerian civilization.
Return to questions list.

83. How Reliable Is John M. Allegro?

>I've read John M. Allegro's Book "The sacred mushroom and the cross"
>and I want to prove his theses for my interpretation of his book.
>
>Hence I'm not a scientist for early languages it is quite difficult to
>me to prove his interpretation of Sumerian words (which are his points of
>start for several causally determinations).
>
>I tried to find equivalents between Allegro's Sumerian words in your Sumerian
>lexicon - some fit other not - but maybe I'm not familiar enough to prove
>it this way.
>
>So - if you have a position to John M. Allegro it would be very interesting in it.

Allegro was not a Sumerologist.

Read:

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/10583>

Return to questions list.

84. Definite Article in Sumerian?

>I thought Sumerian did not have the definite article. You have "a" as the
>article. Can you tell me your source.

On page 241, Thomsen calls /-a/ the subordination suffix, explaining that this is her preference and that most Sumerologists since Falkenstein have called it the nominalization suffix. John Hayes uses the term 'nominalizer' for .a or /a/ throughout versions 1 and 2 of his book.

Return to questions list.

85. Which Style of Cuneiform to Learn?

>I wonder if you could help me out here. I am trying to find a kind of
>cuneiform to learn. There seems to be more than one. Which one is the most
>common, and which one is the best? Is it Ugaritic, Old Persian, Sumerian
>etc.? I am a little confused about why they are different from each other.

Cuneiform refers to using reed styluses to render the sounds of the language. They are all descended from Sumerian pictographs.

Which signs and styles of writing to learn depend on which spoken language you want to learn.

The standard cuneiform signs are usually considered to be those of the late Assyrians, which are good mainly for reading Akkadian language tablets from the first millenium B.C. The library of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, was the first huge library to be discovered, so that is why those are the standard signs. But also the Assyrians were to the Babylonians what the practical-minded Romans were to the Greeks, they organized and standardized the Babylonian signs. The Assyrian signs are the style of cuneiform signs that you will learn from Daniel C. Snell, A Workbook of Cuneiform Signs, available on my Undena Publications order form.

Return to questions list.

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<http://www.sumerian.org/sumerfaq.htm>

<http://www.sumerian.org/sumlinks.htm>

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Site Links Related to Mesopotamia or Language

Ancient Mesopotamia Sites

ABZU - Mesopotamian Study Resources

Akkadian Language (Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform texts)

Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (site at UCLA)

Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (mirror site in Berlin)

Press Release Describing the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative

Mesopotamian Year Names

Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary (PSD) project

The Penn Parsed Corpus of Sumerian project

The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, Oxford

Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts

Mesopotamian Mathematics

Babylonian Mathematics

History Topics in Babylonian Mathematics

Babylonian Astronomy/Astrology Software Program

Bibliography of Mesopotamian Astronomy and Astrology

A Review of the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries (slow to load)

The Development, Heyday, and Demise of Panbabylonism, article by Gary D.

Thompson

History of Constellations and Star Names, with details of Babylonian astronomy

Musical Theory in the Ancient World - the Mesopotamian Precursors of Pythagoras

History of Mesopotamian Measures, by Livio C. Stecchini - Introduction, Length, Volume & Weight, Stereometric Texts, and Seeding Rates
Eisenbraun's - Source for Scholarly Books
Archaeologia - Booksellers of Used, Out of Print, Antiquarian Books on the Near East
Oriental Institute Bookstore
Oriental Institute on the WWW
Samuel Noah Kramer Institute of Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
Vitas of Ancient Near Eastern Scholars on the Web
Names and Addresses of Scholars and Advanced Students Involved in Cuneiform Studies and Near Eastern Archaeology
E-mail Addresses for Ancient Near Eastern Scholars
Who's Who in Cuneiform Studies - Biographies for Deceased Cuneiform Scholars
Contents of the late Dietz Otto Edzard's Assyriological Library - Now Donated to the Università di Bologna
Resources for Ancient Near Eastern Studies - bibliographies of publications by Assyriologists
Resources for Ancient Near Eastern Studies - bibliographies in certain subjects, such as Dance and Music
Internet Researcher: Library Tools for Ancient Near Eastern Research, from Catholic University of America
Gudea Cylinder transcription plates - see the ETCSL for transliterations
CDLI presentation of Sumerian Sign-Lists - from Archaic to Ur III
Old Sumerian Signs copied from Labat (Labyrinths - Part4)
Akkadian Cuneiform Signs - with Index to Borger and Labat
A survey of cuneiform signlists
Old Babylonian Text Corpus - includes Old Babylonian-English dictionary and a sign list with all variant forms
Support page for the CDA - A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian - Addenda, corrigenda, and supporting bibliography
Neo-Assyrian Glossary - a reliable Akkadian-English lexicon (the CDA is much more complete, but not on-line) - download the necessary font near the end of this page
Akkadian - Russian vocabulary
Phillips 13 - tablet with a detailed item inventory from the royal household of King Shulgi of the Ur III dynasty, together with FAQ, glossary, and Ur III map
Dyke College Ur III Texts - photo, transliteration, & translation of 5 receipt tablets
Cuneiform Inscriptions of the University of Minnesota from Ur III Period - 16 Tablets
Babylonian Clay Tablets at South Georgia State Normal College (Valdosta State University) - with research on background of Edgar J. Banks
Cuneiform Tablet Collection of Ripon College, Clark Collection, from Ur III Period - 7 Tablets
Cuneiform Collection of the Science Museum of Minnesota - 12 Tablets
Tablets Relating to Sumerian History in the Schoyen Collection
Tablets relating to Sumerian history, Babylonian history, Assyrian history, Sumerian literature, Babylonian literature, Sumerian Block printing in blind on clay, Sumerian music, Old Babylonian cuneiform musical notation, Sumerian law, Babylonian law, Pre-

literate counting and accounting, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Historical and Literary letters, Lexical texts, and Medical texts
Ashmolean Museum: The Weld-Blundell Prism: The Sumerian King-List
Sumerian temple records at the Australian Institute of Archaeology
Cuneiform Tablets at the Library of Congress
TEXTOS ELAMITAS: Dirección, transcripciones y traducción
Elam between Assyriology and Iranian Studies
Elam.net - Storia, lingua e cultura dell'antico Elam
Mesopotamian King List 2800 – 500 B.C., 199KB worth of material about each ruler of ancient Mesopotamia
Ur III Links
Political Change and Cultural Continuity in Eshnunna from the Ur III to the Old Babylonian Period
Archiv für Orientforschung journal
Journal of Cuneiform Studies Home Page
Journal of Near Eastern Studies
IRAQ, the journal of the British School of Archaeology in IRAQ (BSAI)
Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
51e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Chicago, July 18-22, 2005,
"Classifications of Knowledge in the Ancient Near East: Lexicography, Iconography, Stratigraphy"
International Association for Assyriology
Sumerian Mythology FAQ
Sumerian Mythology, by Samuel Noah Kramer, [1944, 1961]
Sumerian Myths from a class on World Mythology
Civilization Begins - 224 KB worth of facts and quotes about Sumer and Sumerians, from C. McArver of the Porter-Gaud School
Mesopotamian Religion - Bibliography by Piotr Steinkeller
Magic and Divination in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Selected Bibliography by Lorenzo Verderame
The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria by Theophilus G. Pinches (Many Divine Names Are Now Read Differently, But This Detailed 1906 Work Is a Classic)
The International Database of the Melammu Project - entries investigate the continuity, transformation and diffusion of Mesopotamian culture throughout the ancient world from the second millennium BC until Islamic times
The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project
The Babylonian Nineveh Texts, a descriptive database created by Jeanette C. Fincke (2003) as part of The Ashurbanipal Library Project of the British Museum
The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon
Ancient Mesopotamian Libraries, a Word document by Amanda K. Sprochi, Resident Music Librarian, Kent State University
Keilschriftforschung - Universitaet Goettingen
Archives of ANE Discussion List for the Study of the Ancient Near East (Oriental Institute)
ANE 2 - a moderated academic discussion list that focuses on topics and issues of

interest in Ancient Near Eastern Studies
ANE-oriented blog by Dr. Joseph Ray Cathey
Ancient Mesopotamian History and Culture-oriented community journal The Deep
Mesopotamia links from the Quartz Hill School of Theology
Cuneiform Writing @ University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and
Anthropology
Brown University Seniors 'Crack' Cuneiform Tablets
USC's Introduction to Cuneiform Tablets page
Frayne - Scribal Education in Ancient Babylonia
La Mésopotamie ancienne - Naissance de l'écriture
Écriture cunéiforme
Unwrapping and Visualizing Cuneiform Tablets - successful project at Stanford
University to digitize clay tablets
iClay: Java applet to display cuneiform tablets on the Internet
The Digital Classification of Ancient Near Eastern Cuneiform Data (Univ. of Birmingham)
The Cuneiform Digital Palaeography Project (a joint project at the Univ. of Birmingham
and the British Museum)
Digital Hammurabi project at Johns Hopkins University
Cuneiform Signs, Lloyd Anderson's studies to support the Unicode encoding of the
Cuneiform writing system
n2786.pdf - Final Proposal to Encode Cuneiform Script in Unicode (Adobe pdf
document file from June 10, 2004)
Set of 2 TrueType fonts supplying 450 of the most common Sumerian Ur III period
cuneiform signs - developed by Guillaume Malingue
Fonts developed by Bendt Alster for Transliterating Sumerian and Akkadian - not
Cuneiform
Bendt Alster's updates to his Sumerian Proverbs publications
Ancient Near East.com - news, links, journals, etc. from University of Birmingham
In-Depth Information About Sumer, especially as it relates to the city of Nippur
Nippur, Sacred City of Enlil, Supreme God of Sumer and Akkad, by archaeologist
McGuire Gibson
Iraq Site Map - Univ. of Chicago Oriental Institute Map Series
Photographs of Mesopotamian archaeological sites, provided by John C. Sanders &
Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
Database project to track archaeological sites in Iraq - funded by the NEH
Architectural Marvels of Ancient Mesopotamia - informative, but graphics are slow to
load
Housing and Plumbing in Mesopotamia
Women in Mesopotamia (Women in World History Curriculum)
The En-hedu-Ana Research Pages - Unearthing the First Known Author
Enheduanna's Writings
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Official Site for Gilgamesh, The Motion Picture (the IMDB page has disappeared)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art - The Collection: Ancient Near Eastern Art (page
highlights 50 objects from 4,000 years)

Overview of "Treasures of the Royal Tombs of Ur" @ University of Pennsylvania
Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur, McClung Museum's Special Exhibition
Ancient Near Eastern Art - Emory University Carlos Museum
The Morgan Library Collections | Ancient Near Eastern Seals & Tablets
The British Museum, Department of the Ancient Near East
Field Museum 'reuniting' scattered collections from ancient Iraq site
Lost Treasures From Iraq, Objects From The Iraq Museum Database, hosted by Oriental
Institute, Univ. of Chicago
Antiquities of Mesopotamia at the Vatican Museums
The Centrality of the Date Palm and its Sex Life to Sumerians
Ancient Flowers, Trees, Herbs, Fruits, Vegetables and Shrubs
History of Horticulture - Herbals: The Connection Between Horticulture and Medicine
Bibliography of Archaeobotanical Reports from Iraq and Related Items
Medicinal, Culinary and Aromatic Plants in the Near East
Ancient Trade Routes (by Rod Baird)
Land of Sumer and Akkad - Mesopotamian Archaeology
News report that meteor hit southern Iraq around 2300 BC, with discussion at (8)
WORKNOTES ON MAN IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND IMPACT EVENTS, by E.P.
Grondine
27 University Level Essays on Third Millenium Mesopotamia (University of Manchester,
Faculty of Arts)
Ancient Near Eastern Warfare essays by Aaron David Bartels
The Development of Ancient Mesopotamian Law, paper by Dan King
Financing Civilization, book chapter by William N. Goetzmann
Land Markets in the Ancient Near East, by Morris Silver
The Early Evolution of Interest-Bearing Debt, by Michael Hudson
For six other papers on Ancient Mesopotamian subjects, click for the Fall 2002 class on
Race and Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia
Bibliography for the Formation of Early States in the Near East (4,000-2,000BC)
Bibliography for Mesopotamian Urbanism
Bibliography for Mesopotamian Architecture, Construction Materials and Techniques
Iraqi History Page, by Ali al-Sammaw
Genesis in Sumer - book chapter on Sumerian civilization by Frank E. Smitha
Ethics of Sumer, Babylon, and Hittites by Sanderson Beck
Bruce Owen summarizes The emergence of civilization in Mesopotamia: Early cultures -
note that dates given are C-14 (calibrated dates would be approx. 900 years older)
Anthropologist Mike Shupp Summarizes Archaeological Evidence Relating to Origins of
Sumerian Civilization
Anthropologist Mike Shupp Examines Evidence for an Uruk Period Prosperity Zone
School of American Research Advanced Seminar: Mesopotamia in the Era of State
Formation - a reliable source covering the fourth millenium Uruk Period
Book Review of Guillermo Algaze, The Uruk World System: The Dynamics of Expansion
of Early Mesopotamian Civilization
The Life and Death of the Sumerian Language in Comparative Perspective - Piotr

Michalowski

Sumerian Epics, Hymns, and Letters - Piotr Michalowski

The Adaptation of Cuneiform to Akkadian - Piotr Michalowski

Papers on Ancient Mesopotamia - Ian Lawton

Mesopotamian Mystique: The Writings of James Christian

Tracing Assyrian Scholarship, Lecture by Stefan Maul

Ninurta as the God of Wisdom, 2001 paper by Amar Annus

Protohistory in Mesopotamia

The Origins of Writing as a Problem of Historical Epistemology, article by Peter Damerow

Numerical notation and abstraction of concepts, Origins of Writing conf. paper by Pettersson

Ancient Mesopotamian Accounting and Human Cognitive Evolution, article by Tom Mouck

Who Began Writing? Many Theories, Few Answers (NY Times Science article)

Accounting with Tokens in the Ancient Near East, article by Denise Schmandt-Besserat

More Articles by Denise Schmandt-Besserat in Table of Contents at 'Ain Ghazal

Excavation Reports

Animal Figurines, including Animal symbolism in the ancient Near East (Schmandt-Besserat)

Ancient Mesopotamia for Fourth Grade Students

Ancient Mesopotamia: Classroom & Museum Lesson Plans (from the Oriental Institute in Chicago)

Sargon I of Akkad

The Ancient World Web: A very ambitious collection of links

Mythology's Mythinglinks: the Tigris-Euphrates Region of the Ancient Near East - An

Annotated & Illustrated Collection of Worldwide Links to Mythologies, Fairy Tales & Folklore, Sacred Arts & Traditions

Gateways To Babylon - Extensive Links

Archaeology on the Internet - a collection of links

All Empires History Forum - an active site for postings on many ancient and language-related topics

Guide to Universities that Teach Sumerian

U.Chi. Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

UCLA, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

News items about UCLA's Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Dept.

Univ. Of Michigan, Department of Near Eastern Studies

Univ of Michigan Library Near East Div: Links to other resources

Near East specialists at Oxford and relevant links

Yale, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Babylonian Collection

Sumerian greeting on Voyager spacecraft record: silim-ma he2-me-en = Welcome! [May you be healthy!]

Translating Elvis into Sumerian

Sumerian - Ural-Altaic Comparisons

Magyar Comparisons - even more ambitious than the preceding link - compares "Afro-

Asiatic, Altaic, Austro-Asiatic, Basque, Caucasian, Dravidian, Etruscan, Sino-Tibetan, Sumerian and even some Indo-European links."

LexiLine - Sumerian and Indo-European Similarities A to K - Archaic Baltic Latvian

LexiLine - Sumerian and Indo-European Similarities L to Z - Archaic Baltic Latvian

Lithuanian

Austrian Relationship of Sumerian Language

Linguistics 201: The Invention of Writing

Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian Disease and Medicine (CDLI project with bibliography)

History of Dentistry - Ancient Mesopotamia

Food and Cooking in Mesopotamia

Archaeology of Grains and Beer-Making

The Goddess Ninkasi Hymn as a Guide to Beer-Making

The Origins and Ancient History of Wine

A Chronology of the Ancient Near East

A Timeline of Climate History around 3000 BC

Online Encyclopedia of Near Eastern Archaeology

Language or Research Sites

The LINGUIST List

Yamada Language Guides

Language Conference Schedules

Numbers in over 5000 Languages

A Brief Introduction to the History of Names

Linguistic Exploration - links to on-line language projects and dictionaries

Academy of Ancient Languages

Search the Card Catalog of the New York Public Library

RedLightGreen helps you locate the most important books and other research materials in your area of interest, and find out whether what you need is available at your favorite library

WorldCat, a worldwide library catalog created and maintained collectively by more than 9,000 member institutions

article on Sumerian Language in the Wikipedia free encyclopedia

article that is especially informative about Sumerian grammar in the German version of Wikipedia, based on an article by Ernst Kausen, Die sumerische Sprache

The Yoshikawa Database of Materials for a Sumerian Lexicon - search for a word or word compound and get handwritten references to publications where the word occurs

The sci.lang Newsgroup FAQ

Google Groups - search the contents of the Usenet discussion forums

Ancient Scripts of the World, with Historical Linguistics Links

Ancient Languages and Scripts

Ancient Indus Valley Script

Religion Reflected in the Indus Valley Script, Article by Asko Parpola

Dr. Steve Farmer's evidence that the so-called Indus script was not part of a true writing system nor was the Harappan civilization literate

Old Europe 'Writing' Bibliographic References

Proto-Semitic Language and Culture - excellent article by John Huehnergard
web site of the late L.O. Schuman - the 103 Kb salient.pdf essay explores The Semitic Languages and Hamito-Semitic, Salient Features of Renewed Etymology, being an abstract of an unpublished manuscript on Semitic etymology, historical linguistics, and general linguistics
The Early History of Indo-European Languages - by Thomas V. Gamkrelidze and V. V. Ivanov
Examining the Farming/Language Dispersal Hypothesis - edited by Peter Bellwood and Colin Renfrew
Phylogenetic network method puts origin of Proto-Indo-European language at 8100 BC $\pm$ 1,900 years
Early Date for the Birth of Indo-European Languages
The Indo-European Etymological Dictionary (IED)
The Ergative Stage of Early Proto-Indoeuropean
The Tower of Babel - Moscow protolanguage project that was headed by the late Sergei Starostin
Evolution of Human Languages, An international project on the linguistic prehistory of humanity
About the Hungarian Language
The Chinese Language and its Development
The Chinese Language: Myths and Facts
Sanskrit-English Dictionary Project
Historical Linguistics links by the Netscape Open Directory Project
Language Origins Society
Evolution of Language - Program of a comprehensive April, 2000 conference
Margaret Magnus's sound symbolism links
Archives of SOUNDSYMBOL List
The memetic origin of language: modern humans as musical primates
Whistled Speech
Deaf children create new sign language
American Scientist Online - The Gestural Origins of Language
Gesture Language in Naples - see 4th paragraph in particular
Dan Moonhawk Alford's Home Page
Essays on thinking and language by Yuri Tarnopolsky
Henry Drummond on The Evolution of Language, chapter 5 of The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man, 1904
Speaking in Tongues:Theories on the Origins of Language
Language evolved in a leap - article by Ferrer i Cancho, R. & Solé, R. V. "Least effort and the origins of scaling in human language."
Report on a new computer program that uses language structure, not vocabulary, to analyze the degree of relatedness between languages
Return to Sumerian language page.
This page maintained by:
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<http://www.sumerian.org/sumlinks.htm>

<http://sumerian.org/proverbs.htm>

270 captures

29 Feb 2000 - 25 Jul 2025

Apr JUN Jul

10

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

Proverbs in Sumerian Cuneiform - Click on a sign to see its reading. Then click on Back.

ùkur-re a-na-àm mu-un-tur-re
é-na4-kín-na gú-im-šu-rin-na-kam
túg-bir7-a-ni nu-kal-la-ge-[da]m
níg-ú-gu-dé-a-ni nu-kin-kin-d[a]m

How lowly is the poor man!
A mill (for him) (is) the edge of the oven;
His ripped garment will not be mended;
What he has lost will not be sought for!
poor man how-is lowly
mill edge-oven-of
garment-ripped-his not-excellent-will be
what-lost-his not-search for-will be
ùkur-re ur5-ra-àm al-t[u]r-[r]e
ka-ta-kar-ra ur5-ra ab-su-su

The poor man --- by (his) debts is he brought low!
What is snatched out of his mouth must repay (his) debts.
poor man debts-is thematic particle-made small
mouth-from-snatch debts thematic particle-repay
[níg]-ge-na-da a-ba in-da-di nam-ti ì-ù-tu

Whoever has walked with truth generates life.
truth-with whoever walked life generates
ukùr
re
a

na
àm
mu
un
tur
re

é
na⁴
kín
na
gú
im
šu
rin
na
kam

túg
bir⁷
a
ni
nu
kal
la
ge
[da]m

níg
ú
gu
dé
a
ni
nu
kin
kin
d[a]m

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<https://secure9.other-world.com/clients/sumerian/orders.htm>

1 capture

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Jan FEB Mar

26

2005 2006 2007

About this capture

PLACE A SECURE ORDER FOR SUMERIAN LANGUAGE BOOKS

We have about 20 copies left in stock of *The Sumerian Language: An Introduction to its History and Grammatical Structure*, by Marie-Louise Thomsen, Copenhagen, Mesopotamia 10, 3rd edition, 376 pages including a new 13-page Supplementary Bibliography; 15 cm. by 22 cm. paperback - \$130.

Thomsen is the standard textbook for learning the Sumerian language. This well-organized book teaches Sumerian grammar and provides many helpful examples of usage. This book is now out-of-print with the publisher, who has decided not to reprint, so there will be no copies available after my copies are sold. Earlier editions of Thomsen have been out-of-print for years at a time, so you may wish to order a copy of this valuable book now.

We also have in stock both hardcover and paperbound copies of John L. Hayes, *A Manual of Sumerian Grammar and Texts, Second Revised and Expanded Edition*, Malibu 2000, 471 pages - \$40 for softcover and \$50 for hardcover. Hayes introduces reading Sumerian in cuneiform in the form of 26 lessons. Each of the lessons introduces new vocabulary, parts of speech, and additional cuneiform signs in the way that the Sumerians wrote them (as opposed to their later Assyrian form). The appendices discuss the sign lists and other resources that are available to Sumerologists. When these two books are in print, students typically start with Hayes and then graduate to Thomsen.

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58 captures
25 Nov 2005 - 15 Mar 2025
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About this capture
Cuneiform Software
Advanced Electronic Cuneiform Processing Projects

Welcome to this page of information about Massimo Pompeo's two world-leading projects in the Cuneiform Languages, TCD (The Cuneiform Dictionary) and TCT (The Cuneiform Texts Resources).

Massimo has created two highly-developed Windows software programs that offer unique help to the student/scholar working with 1) cuneiform tablets or transcriptions, and 2) transliterated Sumerian language texts. Students and scholars can download and register these two programs from the The Sumerian Language Page web site.

The Cuneiform Dictionary

This is the only (2005) interactive cuneiform dictionary in the world. Any sign -broken or not- can usually be found in less than 1 second, or 10 seconds from when you choose to search for it (if you follow carefully the TCD tutorial, spending at least 5 mins on it). If you have spent any frustrated time leafing through a sign list in search of a particular cuneiform sign, you will appreciate the speed with which this \$39 sign-matching program works.

This is a small preview of The Cuneiform Dictionary: basically, the user draws a few wedges (cunei) on the left area, and TCD shows which signs are similar to the designed shape, while you continue designing. Signs are selected by their similarity with the shape that you draw.

The Cuneiform Dictionary comes with a large dictionary of Sumerian and Akkadian cuneiform signs. The program is not free, but at \$39, it is reasonably-priced.

See more details and link to download.

The Cuneiform Texts Resources

This is the only (2005) Text Engine that searches both textual references and text parallels. It can also search transliterated text for sign sequences, regardless of the way in which signs are transliterated!

TCT is free on private, non-shared non-commercial non-public entities machines usage.

This is a small preview of The Cuneiform Texts Resources: basically, the user can enter an expression to look for, either a small sentence or a word sequence, and TCT looks for such expression within a specially compiled text dictionary. The search engine is fault-tolerant, so it searches also for similar expressions. It can also look for sequences of signs, regardless of their reading.

TCT is a free program that currently supports searching 2,700 lines of Sumerian text from Gudea, 31,700 lines of Sumerian literature from the ETCSL, and 66,000 lines of Old Sumerian text from the CDLI. The full \$195 registered installation which is required

for institutional/commercial entities or shared machines additionally supports searching 583,000 lines of Ur III text from the CDLI and 609,000 lines of all types of text from the PSD.

See more details and link to download.

Place Secure Order to register downloaded cuneiform software
Click to return to the top page.

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<http://www.sumerian.org/cmaacat.htm>

193 captures

8 Jun 2004 - 8 Nov 2025

Apr JUN Aug

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About this capture

CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART AUDIO TAPE/COMPACT DISC CATALOG LECTURES ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The last fifteen years have seen steady progress in Ancient Near Eastern studies, with researchers making many discoveries. During this period, the California Museum of Ancient Art (CMAA) has regularly invited the most dynamic speakers to come to Los Angeles to lecture about their findings to museum members.

The CMAA is proud to present its list of audio recordings of past lectures. CMAA audio recordings bring the excitement of discovery and the wonder of learning right into your own home. Now you can hear directly from the brightest minds and foremost authorities on the history and archaeology of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Levant. There are 138 audio recordings available: 64 International Scholars Forum lectures and 13 major theme programs (totaling 76 additional recordings) including: "Invasion of the Sea Peoples and the End of the Bronze Age," "The Age of Akhenaten and Nefertiti," "Sumer the Dawn of Civilization," "Women of the Ancient World," "The Beginnings of Writing in the Ancient Near East," and our most recent lecture series, "Religion in the Ancient World." These recordings are available on either high quality 90-minute cassettes or 80 minute audio CDs (technically compressed when necessary), containing the entire lecture and most or all of the question-and-answer period, as moderated by Jerome Berman, Museum Director. Cassette recordings cost \$14.95 and compact discs cost \$19.95. There is a temporary sale price of \$16.95 per title on orders of five (5) or more compact discs while we introduce this new recording format. Shipping by media mail is \$4.00 for 1-4 tapes/CDs, \$6.50 for 5-10 tapes/CDs and \$10.00 for 11 or more tapes/CDs. Priority and air mail shipping is available but is calculated on a per order basis. Only California residents are charged 8.25% sales tax.

California Museum of Ancient Art, Index of Speakers

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Myths concerning the origin of writing

The Sumerians considered writing to be one of the divine arts they called Me's, which were brought down from Heaven by Enki, the first god to settle on the Earth. Later, the Babylonians attributed the invention of writing to Nabu, who was the son of Marduk and a descendent of Enki's.

Meanwhile, Egyptians believed the goddess, Seshat, had created writing while Thoth, the god of writing, taught it to mankind. Later, the priesthood of Thoth apparently took over and the god of writing was thenceforth credited with its invention.

The Greeks became acquainted with Thoth, but called him "Hermes Trismegistus" and, like the Egyptians, attributed the invention of writing to him. In Rome, it was Hermes' counterpart, Mercury, who was considered to be the inventor of writing.

Thereafter, it was the holy scriptures ... Torah, Bible, Qur'an ... that were regarded as the revealed word of God, written by Him in a language deemed to have existed forever. As late as 1668, John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, the chief founder of the Royal Society in England, expressed belief that Adam had created the Hebrew alphabet. Wilkins was not the only scientist searching for the original Adamic language that supposedly existed before the tower of Babel. Even Sir Isaac Newton signed on for a while.

The nineteenth century produced a great change in theology. In his 1896 book, "The Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom," Andrew Dickenson White wrote:

"As to the origin of writing, we have the more eminent theologians at first insisting that God taught Adam to write; next we find them gradually retreating from this position, but insisting that writing was taught to the world by Noah. After the retreat from this position, we find them insisting that it was Moses whom God taught to write. But scientific modes of thought still progressed, and we next have influential theologians agreeing that writing was a Mosaic invention; this is followed by another theological retreat to the position that writing was a post-Mosaic invention. Finally, all the positions are relinquished, save by some few skirmishers who appear now and then upon the horizon, making attempts to defend some subtle method of 'reconciling' the Babel myth with modern science."

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Who invented the written word?

According to Jared Diamond in his book, Guns, Germs, and Steel, "The two indisputably independent inventions of writing were achieved by the Sumerians of Mesopotamia somewhat before 3000 BC and by Mexican Indians somewhat before 600 BC; Egyptian

writing of 3000 BC and Chinese writing (by 1300 BC) may also have arisen independently. Probably all other peoples who have developed writing since then have borrowed, adapted, or at least been inspired by existing systems.”

Professor Denise Schmandt-Besserat in her book, *Before Writing* - Vol. 1, states, “It is now generally agreed that writing was invented in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, in the late fourth millennium BC and spread from there to Egypt, Elam and the Indus Valley. The origin of Chinese and Mesoamerican writing is still enigmatic.” This leaves Sumer as the undisputed source of the first written records of any type.

In addition, Sumerian has been one of the ancient languages most studied because Sumer, an ancient civilization flourishing at the dawn of history, was located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southern Iraq, where the Biblical site of the Garden of Eden is reputed to have been located.

We know little about the Sumerian people. Because the names of the rivers, ‘Euphrates’ and ‘Tigris’ are not Sumerian words, we can be fairly certain Sumerians were rather recent arrivals to Land Between the Rivers at the time recorded history starts, a little before 3000 BC. The earliest written Sumerian inscriptions were found on tablets in excavations at Uruk (the Biblical city of Erech) and date to around 3100 BC. Although the Sumerian language dropped out of daily use about 2000 BC, it remained a classical language (much like today’s Latin) and continued to be used in classical documents until 1 AD.

Unfortunately for the Sumerians, but fortunate for us, many of their cities were burned when destroyed, baking and preserving many thousands of their inscribed clay tablets.

This, then, is a history of the origin of the written word, which starts in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, to the north and east of that part of the Fertile Crescent we now call Iraq.

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Origin of writing – 1 > The use of pebbles as counters

Cave paintings in Europe, made tens of thousands of years ago possibly for some religious purpose, never developed into writing. The first crude but significant marks made by men, were used for counting, like tallies, that are lost forever in the mists of prehistory. But we can trace the events thereafter that led to the written word.

Dogs were the first animal domesticated by man, approximately 14,000 BC. A 12,000-year-old grave has been excavated in what is today the country of Israel, where hunter-gatherers buried one of their companions with his hand resting on a puppy. It's an open question if humans adopted wolf pups or if dogs chose to domesticate themselves. The DNAs of dogs and wolves are nearly identical. Whatever occurred, dogs soon became man's best friend.

As companions to hunter-gatherers, dogs helped their masters flush game into the open, pursue it and, finally, recover it. In other words, the hunter-gatherer trained his dog to work with him. They became a team, more efficient together than either alone.

Thousands of years later, around 8,500 BC, sheep and goats were domesticated. Unlike dogs, who were kept as companions, sheep and goats were raised as commodities, kept for their fleece, meat, etc. Where a hunter limited the number of dogs owned, the herder of sheep or goats, often with the help of his dog, continually attempted to increase the size of his herd. This raised the question of how to keep count of it, to ensure none of his animals got lost or overlooked.

Although the number in the herd tended to increase, it was continually changing. The use of tally marks would soon have proved unsatisfactory. While additions due to births would have been easy to tally, losses due to wild animals, disease and consumption would have been much more difficult to mark. Any use of a tally stick would soon have left it so marked up as to become virtually useless.

This is where some unknown herder, before 8,000 BC, first abandoned the use of tally marks and substituted pebbles instead, adding one for each birth and taking away one

for each loss. By keeping the pebbles in a bowl or leather bag, he could at any time count the number and immediately know how many animals should be in his herd.

Counters, the most primitive form of writing, had come into existence.

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16 captures

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About this capture

James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"
Watchman's Call

A story about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2001

About an hour before the call of the midnight watch, Dashan heard rapid footsteps coming up the access stairs. A woman in a shift raced out on the walkway atop the city wall followed by a giant of a man. By the gods, why did this have to happen to him? He grabbed his spear and braced for trouble.

"Help me, sir!" the woman screamed. "Help me!" Her eyes were wide with fright. She flung herself at Dashan, throwing her arms around him, hugging him. "Please, sir!"

Dashan shielded her with his left arm while pointing his spear towards her pursuer. The man stopped short. "She stole my money," he snarled. "I mean to get it back." He made a lunge and only a quick spear jab forced him back.

"Careful," Dashan warned. "I'm the watchman on duty."

The man squinted at him. "Kaldee, ain't you?"

Dashan nodded. The man was big, a full head taller than himself. And muscular. He noticed the man's sandals and the copper dagger stuck in the waist of his leather kilt.

"That woman you got aholt of there is a harlot," the man claimed. "She's a thief besides. Done stole my money."

"So you say." Dashan looked down at the woman still clinging to him. She remained silent, her face pressed against his bare chest. "Let go, ma'am," he told her, using his free hand to pry her loose. "You're safe now. Let go, and tell me what's going on."

The woman sniffled as he pushed her away and wiped her eyes with the back of her arm. She was barefooted and dressed in a worker's shift, one that left her right arm and chest exposed. Dashan couldn't help but notice the sag of her exposed breast.

"Tell me what happened," he said again.

"That man's a sailor, a stranger off one of the ships down at the quay. I was in the tavern when he come in so I acted friendly-like and shared a pot or two of beer with him. He offered me five shekels of copper to do it with him."

She paused. "You have to understand I was a mite short," she explained. Dashan

said nothing and she went on. "I told him I wouldn't do it for less than ten. I saw he was drunk and didn't like it none, but he pulled his money out and weighed it on my scales. When I had a full ten shekels, I packed it up and took him to my place in the wall. That's where we did it."

The sailor added, "After we was done, I checked my moneybag and found another ten shekels gone."

"He was so drunk," the woman said, "he couldn't hardly do it. Besides, I never touched his moneybag."

"Hah! I saw at least twenty shekels of copper fall out of the pocket of her shift when she put it back on."

"You weren't my onliest admirer, Mr. Know-It-All!"

"Empty your pocket," the sailor dared her. "Empty it right here in front of the watchman. Go on, Lili. I dare you."

"Lili," Dashan said. "Is that your name?"

"Bet-lili, sir. Lived here in Zabalam all my life."

"And you took no money from this sailor?"

"No more'n the ten shekels he agreed to, sir. How could I? His moneybag is inside of his kilt."

"You see! She knows where I keeps my money!" the sailor exclaimed. "And she was the one that had holt of my kilt!"

"That's the thanks I get for tryin' to help you," Bet-lili replied. "You told me you couldn't find your damned kilt. Said it was too dark. So I went and found it and to give it to you. I should have let you go on out naked and be a laughingstock."

"Bitch!"

"Hold on, sailor," Dashan said. "We don't talk to women like that here in Zabalam."

"I just wants my money back," the sailor said.

"Tell me what she took. Describe it."

"Well ... " the sailor hesitated.

"You said you saw money fall out of the pocket of her shift. Didn't you recognize it?"

"Well, I paid her with a couple of snips of wire."

"So, ten shekels were snippets of copper wire. What were the other ten shekels you claim she took?"

"Well ... " the sailor seemed reluctant to say more. Even in the moonlight, Dashan could see the frustration building in him, his face sweating and his eyes starting to bulge. He backed away a step.

"You have a nerve questionin' me, you damned Kaldee pig!" the sailor growled. He touched the handle of the dagger in his kilt. "I want my money back. I'm gonna get it!"

Dashan took a deep breath and said, "Not on my watch."

"We'll see." The sailor drew his dagger but then side-stepped and pushed Bet-lili into Dashan with his other hand, knocking Dashan's spear clattering to the walkway.

The sailor roared with laughter. "You Kaldees are a little slow, ain't you?" He started circling, moving towards the spear laying on the walkway.

Dashan crouched to retrieve it and the sailor sprang at him. Dashan twisted to duck the swing of his dagger and then grabbed the sailor's forearm, pulling it downward while he raised up, flipping his attacker over his back. The sailor somersaulted over Dashan's head, hitting the edge of the walkway and sliding off over the edge. His body thudded when it landed in the dark city street below.

Bet-lili came up beside Dashan and stared down at the street dimly lit by moonlight. "He don't seem to be movin'."

"He may be dead," Dashan said. "It's thirty feet down at this point." He went back to the rampart where he had hung his watchman's horn. Putting it to his lips, he blew three short blasts to call for help.

Men gathered quickly around the body in the street below. "That's the drunk sailor who attacked me," Dashan called down to them. "He fell off the wall in the fight that followed. See if you can help him. And send up the quarter captain so I can make my report."

"This man's already dead, officer," a voice called back. "Looks like his neck's broke. The captain's been sent for. He should be up there in a few minutes."

Bet-lili touched Dashan's arm. "You saved me from being robbed or -- maybe -- worse."

I'm very grateful to you, sir, and I don't even know your name. Who are you?"

"Dashan-Shamash," he answered.

"Dashan-Shamash. Nice name," she said. "I like its sound. What can I do to show my gratitude? Spend the night with you?"

"Thanks, but I'm the appointed night watchman tonight. I'm handling a double shift tonight, till the call of the morning watch. Right now, I have a report to file."

"I gathered that. Will I be named in the report?"

Dashan nodded. "As a witness."

"Do you realize, sir ... I'm a woman of the wall?"

"Why?" he asked. "You're attractive. Why not get married?"

"Hah," she laughed. "You men don't understand. I was married once. For two years, but no children, so he divorced me because I was barren. I'm infertile. Who would take me to wife?"

"I'm sorry," Dashan said. "I didn't know."

"It ain't your fault. I guess you're thinkin' I solicited the sailor at the tavern."

"It crossed my mind."

"So you'll report and I'll be charged." Bet-lili sighed. "I guess it don't make much difference. Even if I didn't end up in the claypits, they'd be calling me a hag in a few years anyways."

"You're feeling sorry for yourself," Dashan said.

"No offense, sir, but you talk big for bein' such a little man. You seem able to back it up. Who are you, anyway?"

"The sailor was right about me," Dashan answered. "I am Kaldee. I came from a large date palm plantation near Kutalla. Down in central Chaldea. I was a hired hand there, one who cut spates and gathered dates. No future there. So I came to the city to better myself. I'm hoping to become a shepherd."

She looked surprised. "You? A shepherd?" She laughed.

"I'm serious. A shepherd takes a flock into the field for months at a time. But, first, he

has to prove himself trustworthy. That's why I took this job as watchman. To prove myself. I hope some rich man realizes how reliable I am and hires me to tend his flock."

Bet-lili narrowed her eyes at him. "I can't imagine you as a shepherd. You seem too vital for something like that."

Dashan felt himself blush. "Oh, that's only a beginning. I need a stake to move ahead and I'm willing to work hard. Being a shepherd's the best way to get a stake."

"But, sir, when you get your stake, what will you do then? Work for the city or the temple? They own practically all the land. You'd never afford land of your own unless you moved out to the frontier and there's nothin' much except desert out there."

Dashan smiled at the woman. "You seem well informed. Actually, I hope to join the Karum and become a trader."

"Oh!" she gasped. "A trader. No wonder you could handle that big sailor so easily. I'll bet you put a hex on him. Magic. I'll bet you've studied it, haven't you, sir?"

"Hardly," he said. "But I do study, but things like reading, writing and reckoning. I'm trying to improve myself."

"I like that," she said. Then she sobered. "Hell, here I am getting happy for you when I'm going to the claypits."

"Not as I see it," Dashan said.

Bet-lili looked at him. "How's that, sir?"

"Didn't I see the sailor running after you? Chasing you?"

"You sure as hell did."

"And wasn't he aiming to take your money?"

"Yes, sir, that's what he said."

"I call that attempted robbery."

"Well, sir," she said hesitantly, "if you overlook the tavern -"

"I didn't see that, did I?"

"No, sir."

"I report only what I saw. I saw the sailor chase you up here on the city wall with the intent to rob you. You came running to me for help. In the fight that followed, unfortunately, the sailor fell to his death."

A smile of relief lit Bet-lili's face.

"That's how I'll report it," Dashan said.

"That's nice of you, sir. You know, I think you're going to make a great trader. I'd buy from you."

"Thank you."

"Is there any place for a woman like me in the -- how do you call it -- Karum?"

Dashan nodded. "Oh, yes. There's a wool warehouse downwater at Larsa, a town close to the confluence of the canal with the Euphrates. It's a huge complex, a center for spinning, weaving and dyeing. Traders ship from there. The Amurru are crazy about the colored robes they produce."

"Do you think they might have an opening for someone like me?"

"If you promised to work hard."

"Oh -" Bet-lili was about to add something when the sound of approaching footsteps came up the stairway and the quarter captain arrived, wearing his official robe and carrying an oil lamp. "Lili!" he cried out as soon as he saw her. "It's after curfew! What in hell are you doing up here on the city wall in the middle of the night?"

"I almost got robbed, Shesh. A drunk sailor chased me up here. This brave watchman saved me."

The quarter captain turned to Dashan. "Is that so, officer?"

"Yes, sir. That's what happened. The sailor fell off the wall in the fight that followed, sir. I believe he's dead."

"Indeed, he is," the quarter captain said. "I'm going to have to take your report on the incident." As he felt in the sleeve of his robe for a damp clay tablet, he turned back to Bet-lili. "I'm out of the house for the night, Lili. Are you doing anything?"

"Only if you want."

The quarter captain smiled. "Oh, I do, I do." He pulled out a tablet and took it over to the rampart where he set down his oil lamp and pulled out a stylus. "Come over here,

officer, and I'll take your report."

"Yes, sir," Dashan said. He turned to Lili. "They really could use you down at Larsa. You'd have a new life down there, Bet-lili, a future you could look forward to."

She smiled at him. "Thanks, but I don't know. I'm still good for a few more years. My friends are here, you know."

"But - "

"Perhaps ... someday." Then she added, "You're sweet," and kissed Dashan on the cheek. "I have to go now." She winked at him. "If you ever decide you want me, you know where to find me." She turned and left. As he watched her disappear down the stairs, Dashan felt an emptiness open up within him.

"Officer!" the captain called out, "I'm waiting. The incident's not officially concluded until the report is filed."

Dashan gritted his teeth. "Yes, sir, I know. I'm coming."

The End

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About this capture

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Goat Boy

A story about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2001

Humti pointed to a still-green pasture on an upper level of the mountain ahead. "Ain't that the goat boy I see up there?"

Shettur squinted his eyes to make out details on the higher mountain terraces. "It sure is. I can make him out clear as day. Looks like he's all by hisself!"

"Naw, he ain't all by hisself," Humti slapped his comrade on his back. "Look! See all them billies? He's got his damned goats with him!" They both roared with laughter.

"Hell, let him keep his goats," Shettur said. "All we wants is his sheep."

"They looks like easy pickings. I only make out one dog."

"Yeah," Shettur said, "you'd best signal the others."

Humti put his fingers in his mouth and whistled. "That ought to get our men and dogs started."

>>

Girgi was out of sight, on the flank of the flock when Dashan heard him start to whine. He watched the gray-haired sheepdog as it came loping back through the flock to nose his leg. "Hey, what's the matter, boy? Are you trying to tell me something?" The dog continued to nuzzle his leg. He commanded, "Point!"

Girgi turned downhill and took up a point. Dashan let his eyes follow the direction. In the valley below, where the valley vegetation had been parched by the hot summer sun of Susa, he made out a handful of dark figures with horned helmets moving uphill. Then he noticed dark spots working their way up both sides and figured them to be dogs.

"Horned mountain men," Dashan muttered. "With their dogs. Bandits most likely." He reached over and put his hand on Girgi's back to keep him silent. "I see three ... four men, maybe more." Keeping his hand on his dog, Dashan moved behind an outcropping of limestone to conceal himself. Then he unslung the ram's horn from around his neck, put it to his lips and blew.

The hoot filled the air and rang out across the foothills of Susiana.

>>

"What the hell's that?" Shettur asked.

"Sounds like our goat boy's calling for help. But we knows they's ain't nobody around these parts except us."

"Yeah, he ain't likely to get no help."

"Not as far as I can see," Humti said. "Except his goats. Har, har."

Shettur chuckled. "Ain't it a laugh."

"Yeah," Humti said and whistled at the dogs coming up. They watched them spread out to flank the flock scattered about on the terraced pasture above.

>>

Dashan kept an eye on the bandits' dogs, watching them work their way up. He couldn't see all of them but knew there were more than a few coming up on each side of the terrace. "Girgi, why doesn't one of the gods answer my call?"

As if in answer, a clap of thunder resounded in the clear blue mountain sky and a growl came from above. Dashan looked up to see a mountain lion crouched on a precipice not far above them. The beast was licking his chops and gazing down at them.

"Have you been sent to help me?" Dashan called up to the lion in a soft voice. The animal responded to the shepherd's question by laying its head down on its paws and watching with disinterested eyes.

"By the gods!" Dashan muttered at the beast.

Dashan turned around and watched the bandits heft their spears as they started up the incline to the terrace. He heard them whistling to their dogs, calling them in to take over his flock of sheep.

He looked up a last time and saw the lion was still placid and unmoving. What the hell? he wondered. What good have all my tithes been?

Then he turned back to face the bandits. One of them was now less than a hundred paces away. Dashan pointed at the bandit and slapped his dog on the butt. "Go, Girgi! Sic 'em!"

His dog leapt into the air and charged down the slope, towards the lone man, barking furiously, dodging this way and that. The noise and action confused the sheep and the flock started milling.

“Goddamn!” Shettur cried and hurled his spear at the fast-dodging sheep dog. He missed and in a second the dog was on him, his teeth gripping the arm the mountain man had thrown up to protect his face. “Help!” the bandit hollered.

His companions whistled their dogs to the attack. The canines whirled around and headed towards Girgi. Girgi let go of the bandit’s arm and began racing into the middle of the seething flock.

Dashan got to his feet and went to his goats. He slapped the biggest billy on its flank and pointed at the bandits on the inclined approach to the terrace. “Hek! Hek!” he shouted at his goats. A score of awkward animals began ambling downhill in the direction of Girgi who was busy fending off the other dogs.

As clumsy as they appeared, the billies moved with surprising speed, forcing their way through the sheep and catching the bandits’ dogs off guard. One after the other, they lowered their heads and charged the dogs, butting them broadside. The dogs flew through the air, and those able to get up whimpered as they limped away. The bandits soon found themselves facing Dashan’s ornery beasts alone.

“By Nin,” one of the bandits shouted, “these damned goats are fixing to charge us!” He lunged and speared the nearest goat, running it through.

But while trying to draw his spear out, a billy butted him from behind and sent him tumbling over the animal he had just speared. The other billies began pawing the ground, closing the circle around the remaining bandits, stomping and making impatient butting motions with their heads.

“That goat boy’s magicked his goats,” Humti said. Then he shouted, “It ain’t natural!” and took off running down the mountainside. His companions hesitated only briefly before taking to their heels and following him down.

Only when he saw them reach the dried vegetation in the seared valley below did Dashan blow his ram’s horn to recall his animals. When they returned, he rewarded them, fresh sprouts of green for the goats and strips of dried deer meat for Girgi.

He hugged and told each of them, “You’ve done well.”

>>

It was that evening when Dashan was trying to start a fire of mountain-thorn to cook his barley porridge that old Ishkur strolled along, dressed in a full-length mountain robe. “Good evening,” the old god greeted him.

Dashan looked up at the mountain storm god. “Good evening yourself,” Dashan said.

"The weather's been clear. Where've you been keeping yourself all day?"

"Hanging around," the god replied. "Here and there."

"It's about time you showed up here," the shepherd said.

"Oh? Was there some problem?"

Dashan nodded. "By the gods, there was."

The old god stroked his white beard and looked around. "It seems peaceful now. I see no sign of anything out of the ordinary."

"That's because we took care of them."

"We?"

"A gang of mountain bandits tried rustling my sheep." Dashan spit. "My dog and goats chased them off."

"You seem to have your animals exceptionally well trained."

Dashan nodded. "As you see, I am often by myself and have to make do with what I have."

"Yes, I can see. Well, I'm glad you've taken care of everything."

"Where were you while it was going on?"

"Me?" Ishkur grinned. "I was mostly up there." He pointed up to the bare top of the mountain towering above them. "Watching," he added.

"Watching? What kind of behavior is that for a god when one of his most loyal tithers is calling for help?"

"I have more than one mountain to oversee. Besides, I sent help."

"Help? Where?" Dashan put his hand to his eyes and made a great pretense of looking around for it.

"Didn't you hear that clap of thunder this afternoon?"

"That was you?"

"Of course! Who else thunders in the mountainlands?"

"If that was the help you sent, it frightened no one."

"That was just the fanfare." Ishkur pointed at the precipice above them. "I put that mountain lion up there."

Dashan looked up at the ledge now bathed in sunset hues of the setting sun. The mountain lion was still there, its head resting on its paws as it had been all afternoon. "That's the help you sent me?" he asked.

Old Ishkur nodded. "I had him there all the time."

"I know. I saw him. I called him to help but he put his head down on his paws. I don't think he's moved since."

"Don't guess he needed to."

"I don't get it."

"My son, you took care of the situation. You're preparing to become a trader. You'll be traveling to foreign lands where your gods won't be around. I figured you needed to develop a little more self confidence. So I sent the lion down but told him not to intervene unless it became absolutely necessary. I thought I'd give you the chance to handle the situation on your own."

"Thanks a lot," Dashan snorted. "How do I know what you're telling me is true?"

The old god grinned and plucked a long stem of mountain grass, stuck it in his mouth and started chewing on it. "I guess you'll have to test me."

"How about a sign?" Dashan said.

"Okay." Old Ishkur looked around and saw the little pile of mountain-thorn Dashan had been trying to set afire. "Watch," he said and pointed at the briars. The heap burst into flame. "How's that for a sign?"

Dashan hesitated. "Well ..."

"You'd better put your pot of porridge on."

Dashan lifted the pot and rested its wide bottom on stones around the burning branches. "Sometimes, I get the idea you gods are mostly show."

"Is that so? Do you think we just put on occasional performances now and then for our followers?"

“Something like that.”

“Well, you’d better hope not.”

“Why?”

“Haven’t you noticed anything strange about that mountain lion up there on the precipice above us?”

Dashan looked up in the dusk. The lion still seemed to be there, unmoving. “Besides not moving all day?” he asked.

The old god nodded.

“No ... what?”

“He’s not attacked a single one of your sheep.”

“Oh. He’s not acting much like a mountain lion, is he? I guess he really is something special.”

“My son, that’s what I’ve been telling you,” Ishkur said. He looked down at the pot of barley porridge. “I don’t suppose you would have an extra bite or two to spare, would you?”

Dashan narrowed his eyes at the old white-haired god.

“I’ve been up there on top of this mountain all day,” Ishkur said. “Mostly because of you. I’m hungry.”

Dashan grunted.

“Except for your sheep and goats, my son, you’re out here in the mountainlands all by yourself. There’s nothing around you except mountain people. And they’re mostly bandits. There could be a next time you know,” the old god warned.

Dashan thought about that. Sure, why not? he asked himself.

“I guess I could use a little company,” he said and pointed at a grassy spot beside him. “Come, take a seat. The porridge ought to be ready soon.”

The End

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/da005OneNightinUmma.html>

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About this capture

One Night in Umma

A Story of Ancient Sumeria

by James W. Bell © 2001

The sharp sound of a slap was followed by a woman's cry of pain. Tambourines abruptly ceased jingling and dancers stopped. The tavern filled with silence.

Dashan quit sipping beer and looked around, concentrating on the back corner where the slap and cry had come from. He saw a woman, hand to cheek, sprawled on the built-in bench. An angry man on the adjacent bench faced her. Dashan surveyed the room. The taverness stood motionless at the storeroom door. No patron gave any indication of moving so, in spite of his small size, Dashan picked up his staff and walked back to the corner.

He ignored the angry man and spoke to the woman. "Is this man troubling you?"

The man got up, wedged himself between Dashan and the woman. "Hands off," he said. "She's mine for tonight."

"I wasn't talking to you."

"If you talk, you'll damned well talk to me."

"I heard the woman cry out in pain."

"She's a whore," the man replied. "Deserved what she got."

"That's for her to say," Dashan said and tried to push him aside.

The man was swift to react. He swung a heavy fist at Dashan's head. The goatherd ducked his swing and poked the staff in his stomach. "Ooof!" The man went down. "You Kaldee sonuvabitch."

"Want more?" Dashan asked and fainted with his staff.

"Stop it!" the taverness called from the storeroom doorway. "Please."

"I didn't mean to make trouble," the woman pleaded.

The man got up and scowled at Dashan. "What's a damned Kaldee like you doing up here anyways? Why don't you stay in the marshes where your type belongs? We're going to cut you down to size one of these days."

"You'd better leave," Dashan responded. "You're speaking loudly and making a disturbance."

"You don't know who I am."

"I know you're not behaving yourself."

"Listen, I bought this whore for the night. She's mine to do with as I please."

Dashan shook his head. "I say not."

"Piety from a Kaldee?" He wrinkled his nose. "You stink."

"I'm a goatherd."

"By the gods. Then, go herd. Get out of here. You don't belong in a place like this."

"My money spends as good as yours."

"Please – " the woman said.

"You heard the whore, Kaldee. Shut up and go."

"I don't want to make trouble," the woman said. "I wish I'd never come here."

Dashan turned to the woman. "Do you want to leave?"

"She isn't leaving!" the man roared. "I told you. I've hired her for the night."

Dashan faced the irate man head on. "I say she leaves if she wishes."

“The hell she does.” The man reached out, grabbed one of the three-legged stools and swung it at Dashan’s head. Dashan ducked, but not enough, and the stool gave his head a glancing blow.

“By the gods!” the woman screamed. “I never meant to cause all this.”

The man swung the stool again. This time, Dashan fended it off with his staff.

“Your head’s bleeding,” the woman shouted at Dashan.

When the man swung the stool yet again, Dashan batted it out of his hand with his staff and sent it flying across the room.

“Ow!” the man grabbed the hand that had been holding a leg of the stool. “Bastard! You’ve broken my hand!”

The taverness came over. “This fighting must stop now,” she said. “I insist.”

“You’d best get the waterfront patrol,” Dashan said.

The man quick-stepped and kicked at Dashan’s groin. Dashan whacked his leg with his staff and then, as the man went down, gave his butt a whack that sent him sprawling.

Using his good hand, the man raised up from the floor. Breathing heavily, he growled, “You’ll pay, you bastard.” Turning to the taverness, he said, “Go, get the waterfront patrol.”

“Yes, my lord,” she responded and scurried out.

Dashan’s eyes opened wide. “Who is this man?” he asked the woman.

She glanced at the man on the floor before daring to answer. “He is Kilat-Ninurta, Supervisor of the Canals here in Umma.”

“Ah. I’ve tangled with someone important.”

She nodded and the man on the floor guffawed. “As you’ll soon find out.”

Dashan ignored him. “After the patrol arrives,” he told the woman, “we’ll leave if you wish.”

She shook her head. “I’m afraid they will most likely arrest you for striking a municipal officer.”

He raised an eyebrow at her.

"I mean," she hurried to explain, "you being just a common goatherd."

The taverness returned with two members of the waterfront patrol in their leather kilts. "What's going on here?" the big officer asked.

The man on the floor pointed at Dashan. "That Kaldee goatherd attacked me. Broke my hand. I think he may have broken my leg too."

The patrolman recognized the speaker immediately. "Supervisor Kilat-Ninurta!" He bowed. "My lord."

"Arrest that Kaldee scoundrel," Kilat commanded him.

The officer motioned at his partner to grab Dashan's arms behind. Then he took away Dashan's staff. "You won't be needing this for quite a while," he said. "You're under arrest."

Dashan nodded, offering no resistance. "And my goat herd? What becomes of it?"

"Where is your herd?"

"Outside the city," Dashan answered. "Shedded by the East Gate."

"Well, you've attacked Lord Kilat-Ninurta," the big officer said. "Even if the judge feels lenient, you'll spend time in the claypits. Your herd, I suspect, will be forfeited."

"Ah," Dashan commented. "That will be too bad."

"For you perhaps," the patrolman said. Then he asked, "I don't recognize you. Who are you and where are you from, goatherd?"

"Dashan. Dashan of Zabalam."

The officer's eyes narrowed. "You look Kaldee to me."

"I am, but I've long called Zabalam my home."

"You live there?"

Dashan shook his head. "I live on the Frontier, with my goats."

The officer's eyes widened. "You mean you are the Dashan of the Frontier?"

Dashan nodded.

The officer turned to Kilat-Ninurta, still on the floor, and stared hard at him.

"I didn't know," Kilat said. "I had no idea. I swear. I've known the Defender of the Frontier was a resident of Zabalam. But I had no idea he might be here in Umma."

It warmed Dashan's heart to hear himself referred to as Defender of the Frontier. He knew the odds had turned and were now in his favor. It took but a moment for him to recall the section of Karum code that read, long term gain comes from not pressing temporary advantage too hard. "Maybe I can explain what happened," he told the officer.

"I'd appreciate it."

"This woman, who the supervisor hired for the night, changed her mind and wanted to leave. Perhaps she felt ill. I offered to walk her home but, since my lord felt he had employed her for the night, there came to be a misunderstanding between us."

The officer looked skeptical.

"Yes, a misunderstanding," Kilat-Ninurta said. "An incident." He got to his feet.

"But, my lord," the officer said, "you said he had broken your hand."

Kilat flexed his hand with some pain. "Sprained, yes. But not broken. See?" He flexed his hand again. "I must admit I was overwrought when you arrived."

The officer turned to the woman. "You wish to leave?" he asked her.

She nodded. "Yes," she said, "it's been a terrible night. Really, I don't feel well."

He turned back to Kilat-Ninurta. "My lord, - "

"By all means, officer, let her go on her way. It's best we all forget this."

The officer nodded to the woman. She turned to Dashan and asked, "Would – would you escort me?"

"Gladly," he said and put out his hand for his staff. The officer returned it and he walked out of the tavern with the woman.

* * *

"I'll walk you home," he told her.

"Surely you realize what the supervisor said was true. I am a prostitute. I live in the wall."

"I guessed as much. But if you'd prefer, we can sit down here on the corniche and talk. What's your name anyway."

"Lila," she answered as she seated herself on the flood wall. "Actually, it's Lila-Enlil but my family disowned me when I ran away from home."

"Ah. You ran away?"

"Yes, to come to the city. You see, we lived on the Frontier and I found life dull and boring there." Suddenly, she realized she the man she was talking to was Defender of the Frontier, a goatherd who spent most of his life on the Frontier with his goats, protecting the cities of the Iturungal. She giggled. "I guess you already know about the Frontier, don't you?"

"It's why I like coming into town once in a while."

"To visit prostitutes?" she asked.

"No. I have. But generally, I'm too shy and I feel uncomfortable."

"You?" Lila giggled. "As Defender of the Frontier, you're famous! Any prostitute in this town would jump at the chance to service you."

"Any?"

Lila grinned at him and nodded. "Yes. If you must know, me too. Are you so surprised?" She took hold of his hand and asked, "Did you tell the others who you were?"

Dashan shook his head.

"Silly. Why not? Don't you know prostitutes like to go out with important men, men who are famous. Word gets around and they get talked about. It's very pleasant and, besides," she confided, "it's good for business."

"Is that why you went out with Kilat-Ninurta?"

"Oh yes. At least that's why I started going out with him. I've been with him a number of times. It was nice at first but now he's become more demanding. If I don't do everything he says, he hurts me, like when he slapped me in the tavern tonight."

"Why don't you stop going out with him?"

Lila looked at Dashan. "My reputation. An important official like the Supervisor of Canals can ruin a prostitute's reputation overnight, if he wishes."

“Reputation?”

Lila nodded. “Prostitutes have reputations. No one dares date a prostitute with a bad reputation. Might get arrested by the shore patrol. If the supervisor puts out the word, my business will be ruined. It probably is, anyway.”

“Why?”

“Because,” Lila said. “The disturbance at the tavern.”

“When I intervened?”

“If you must know—yes.”

“You’re saying I ruined your reputation tonight?”

Lila nodded. “Probably. At least here in Umma. I’ll have to go somewhere else.”

“Ever thought of going back home?”

“They wouldn’t have me now. You men don’t understand. A fallen woman, once down, has no way back up.”

“We have a textile mill at Larsa. We’re on the lookout for workers.”

“Who’s we?”

Dashan laughed. “I may be a goatherd, Lila, and Defender of the Frontier, but I’m also a trader—a member of the Karum. We operate a number of workshops in the south. Our textile shop at Larsa is one of the largest in the Land. Has lots of jobs.”

“What type of jobs?” Lila asked. “Is it like working in a temple shop?”

“Yes, somewhat. Only we pay a little better and there are fewer restrictions on what you can and cannot do. But, work starts at the call of the morning watch and quits when the evening watch is called.”

“Every day?”

“Except Feast Days.”

“Monotonous,” she said. “I’d get bored, Dashan. I mean, doing the same thing over and over, day after day.”

“That’s the way life is, Lila. Occasionally, a surprise or a change comes along and livens things up. We traders are trying to make the changes happen more often.”

“A life like that wouldn’t do for me. I’m not ready to settle down.”

“Ah.” Dashan felt a keen sense of disappointment. “I see. I shouldn’t have interfered at the tavern.”

Lila paused and he could tell it was to think of a nice way to answer him. “Perhaps it might have been better if you hadn’t.”

“Now, because of me, you’re going to have to leave Umma.”

“Probably,” Lila responded. Then she added, “But, I really appreciate what you tried to do. It just didn’t work.”

“Many things I try don’t work.”

“Don’t feel bad. Now that you know I’m a prostitute, why don’t you come to the wall with me. I live near the East Gate. You could pick up your herd first thing in the morning and be gone.”

“I have no money,” Dashan said. “What I earned, I’ve already spent on supplies and what was left over, I used to acquire more goats. By the time I reached the tavern tonight, I had only enough left for a pot of beer.”

“Oh,” Lila said, “don’t worry about that. I would never make you pay.”

Dashan looked puzzled.

“You’re Defender of the Frontier. If you came to my place, word would get around. You’d enhance my reputation and maybe I wouldn’t have to leave town after all.”

“If you put it that way – ”

Lila stood and tugged at his hand. “Come on. Let’s go.”

Dashan got up and joined her.

* * *

The next morning, when the Morning Watch was called and the East Gate opened, Lila came out of the wall with Dashan. “Goodbye, Lila,” he told her. “Thanks for a wonderful night.”

"I can't let the Defender of the Frontier leave like that," she proclaimed in a loud voice and threw her arms around his neck to give him a kiss.

"What's all this for?" Dashan asked.

Lila answered in a soft voice. "Look around. Everybody's looking out their windows. I think you've just helped me re-establish my reputation."

"Lila," Dashan protested, "that's a – "

"Slutty thing to say," she finished the sentence for him. "I know, but that's what I am."

Dashan sighed. "I wish you well," he said and turned to wave goodbye as he left.

"And you," she called after him. Then she turned and, with a smile, faced her new admirers looking out their windows. Yes, she thought, business was going to be good.

The End

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James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Showdown

on the Frontier

A story about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2001

A sweaty little boy came running down the towpath. "We're being attacked!" he shouted. "They've come again!"

Sheshkallum put down his weeding hoe, wiped the perspiration from his forehead and looked up. The youngster was scarcely more than ten years old and seemed almost

exhausted. “What’s this?” he asked the lad. “Who’s coming?”

The boy stopped to catch his breath. “Bandits.” He gestured wildly behind him. “Horned bandits from the mountainlands.”

The farmer peered over the boy’s head. “I don’t see any. Where are they?”

The boy turned and pointed at the specks in the sky over the Gibil Canal. “Up there. Those are the zu-birds coming with them. Can’t you see them?”

“By the gods, boy, those are zu-birds. What the hell,” he muttered as he ran to his reed house. “Lisha!” he shouted to his wife, “get the children and take them down to Apisala.”

His wife came to the door followed by three children who cowered behind her. “What’s happening?”

“Sounds like horned bandits are raiding again. You’d best get moving.”

“What about you, Shesh?”

“I’ll stay and join the upwater farmers when they show up. If it’s a serious raid, we’ll try a defense line at the bridge that’s over our sluice.” He took a last look at her and his three small children. “It’ll insure you and the others will have time enough to escape.” He grabbed her and gave her a hug. “Now, go!” he ordered and watched her hurry off with the children.

>>

Fleeing women and children came running down the towpath and Sheshkallum motioned them on. When the farmers finally arrived, a scraggly lot called from their fields, he welcomed them. “I have an open sluice with a bridge over it a short ways down the canal,” he told them. “Maybe we could tear down the bridge and make a stand on the other side of the sluice.”

“Sounds as good a place as any,” the tallest of the group said. “If the bandits hadn’t stopped to loot some of our homes, we’d likely all be dead already.”

“So the attack is that serious?” Sheshkallum asked.

“It’s them damned zu-birds,” the tall farmer answered. “Every time we form a skirmish line and get ready for the bandits – wham – the zu-birds come down from overhead and attack us from behind.” He shook his head. “We’ve lost near a quarter of our men.”

"The zu-birds actually attacked you?" When the old man nodded, Sheshkallum went on, "I'm not understanding this. Zu-birds are supposed to be under the control of the Skylord. Why would he let his birds help the bandits?"

The farmer grimaced and shrugged instead of answering.

"Well, dammit," Sheshkallum said, "let's get down to the bridge. If we destroy it, anyone hoping to get to Apisala will have to wade. We can hold them there."

>>

As the farmers made their way over the bridge, a handful of zu-birds suddenly dived out of the sky and attacked with extended talons and outstretched claws. It took all the farmers' efforts, whacking at the talons with hoes and staffs, to keep from being clawed or carried off. But, even as they fended off the birds, they noticed the horned bandits arriving, savages wearing leather helmets with horns, rushing the bridge. "The bandits are here," one farmer gave warning. "We're done for!"

"The hell you say!" Sheshkallum shouted and ran back to the narrow bridge. He took a position in the middle of the span, swinging his hoe at two of the birds diving on him. As the bandits neared, they hefted their spears.

Suddenly, Sheshkallum heard behind him the blare of a goat horn and a man's voice shouting "Hek! Hek!" Faint at first, but growing louder and picking up tempo, he caught the sounds of hooves pummeling the towpath. "By the gods," someone in the rear shouted, "there's a herd of goats on the rampage!"

Someone else yelled, "It's the goatherd!"

Sheshkallum swung his hoe at the first bandit to reach the bridge and quickly turned to see what was happening. The goats were almost on him. Quickly, he stepped back off the bridge and dodged to one side. Immediately, goats thundered across. They came first upon the lead horned bandit and butted him into the water. Then, reaching the other side, they began running amuck among the other armed mountain men, bleating, butting and creating havoc.

Then, Dashan, the goatherd, appeared. "Men, let my goats through," he shouted. "Let them handle the bandits. Protect yourselves. Kneel and raise your hoe or staff up into the air. It'll keep you out of the clutches of the birds."

The farmers were doing this when the sky when a brilliant flash of lightning lit the sky. A booming crack of thunder followed that shook the Earth. The struggle at the canal ceased for a moment as everybody, man and animal alike, looked up to see an ominous cloudmass roiling overhead. Ninurta, the young Sumerian storm god, stood on the

leading edge, looking down.

As they watched, he pulled out another lightning bolt and hurled it down to the Earth. It struck one of the goats, exploding him and filling the air with reverberations of thunder. Cries of joy from the bandits mixed with cries of despair from the farmers.

Dashan knelt amid the overwhelming tumult, bowed his head and concentrated. "Father Ishkur, where are you? Come quickly. I need you, Father Ishkur."

The old storm god of the mountainlands answered from a small, unnoticed cloud overhead, "Here I am, my son. Up here. Directly overhead."

Dashan looked up as another of Ninurta's lightning bolts sizzled through the air on its way down to the Earth. Another goat was struck to the accompaniment of thunder.

"Father Ishkur, you have to stop Ninurta," Dashan pleaded with the old god. "He's killing my goats one by one. After the goats, it will be our turn. We won't stand a chance."

"My son," Ishkur demurred, "I would if I could, but I'm no match for a virile god like Ninurta. He's young and powerful. Were I to offend him, he would strike me down as surely as he is clobbering your goats."

"Father, is there nothing you can do? Are we doomed?"

The old god looked up and narrowed his eyes at the dark underside of the cloudmass. "Perhaps not. Let me try something. Hand me your hoe, my son. I'll go up under Ninurta's cloud and try to poke a hole in the bottom of it."

Dashan held up his hoe and the cloud Ishkur was on was lowered down between bolts of lightning so the old god could reach out and take it from his hand. Then Dashan watched the cloud rise. Another searing bolt of lightning streaked down from the great cloudmass, narrowly missing the little cloud. Thunder shook the Earth again. Dashan watched as Ishkur's little cloud neared the dark underside of Ninurta's cloudmass.

He saw the old god stand up and, with both hands, hold the hoe so that the end of the handle pointed upwards. With obvious force, Ishkur jabbed it into the great cloud overhead. It was as if a bladder had burst! Water gushed out of the hole, spraying into the air, filling it with a myriad of water drops so it pelted the Earth as rain.

Above all, Dashan heard Ninurta give one thunderous shout, "What the hell!"

The rain came down in sheets and pelted the Earth. It quickly grounded the zu-birds and they hid from the storm. On the far side of the bridge, the goats huddled together for protection. Farther away, the bandits covered themselves, disappearing from view.

Even Ishkur's little cloud, drowned by the outpouring, became waterlogged and sank, landing in the canal. The rain stopped everything. Nothing moved.

>>

Then a breeze blew from the north and became a wind that turned into a gale. It blew away Ninurta's great sinking cloud mass so that the bright sun shone again. A speck appeared high overhead and rapidly increased in size. As it came down to the Earth, Dashan saw it was Enlil, the mighty Skylord of the Earth, riding his Anzu bird. He spiraled down over the bridge and, holding the reins in one hand, surveyed the scene below.

"What's been going on down there?" the Skylord asked.

Dashan answered the supreme lord of the Earth. "We were being attacked by horned bandits and zu-birds from the mountainlands when Ninurta arrived."

"Ninurta is my son," Enlil proclaimed. "I saw his cloud had been punctured. Was it you, mortal, who dared to puncture his cloud?"

At this point, Ishkur spoke from the canal. "Mighty Skylord, it was I who punctured your son's cloud."

The Skylord looked down. "You!" he exclaimed. "Ishkur, you belong up in the mountainlands. By Nergal, what are you doing down here?"

"My lord," Ishkur said, "my cloud was under Ninurta's cloud when it was punctured. The outpouring of water was so great that my cloud became waterlogged and fell into the canal, as you can see. I'm here till my cloud is dry again."

The Skylord eyes fastened hard on Ishkur. "Tell me, what were you doing under Ninurta's cloud?"

"Dashan prayed to me. He requested I stop Ninurta and the zu-birds."

"Who's Dashan?"

"The mortal who just spoke to you. That goatherd standing over there."

"By Nin, Ishkur, how did a mortal get involved in this thing? Are you telling me you listened to the entreaties of a mere goatherd?"

"My lord, the goatherd is my supplicant. He often sings my praises. And when he's in the mountainlands, he always lets me savor the sweet smell of the meat he cooks."

“What! Have you no more than this one worshipper? And him a goatherd?” Stress rendered the Skylord’s voice high pitched.

Ishkur pulled himself half out of the water and nodded. “My lord, everybody else left the mountainlands long ago – except the bandits, and I haven’t found them to be religious.”

“You said this goatherd told you about Ninurta and the zu-birds?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Didn’t you realize that Ninurta was my son and that the birds were my personal watchers?”

“I – I guess I didn’t think things through, my lord.”

“Ishkur!”

“Yes, my lord.”

“This sort of thing must stop—now! These foothills, this area human mortals call the Frontier, is becoming the graveyard of the gods. First, it was Asag and then Humban, demonized as Humbaba by Inanna’s brother and slain by Enkidu. We must stop letting ourselves get involved with the affairs of the human mortals.”

“A thousand apologies, my lord, but your zu-birds were already involved, helping the horned bandits long before I arrived. When I came, they were attacking the farmers.”

“This is a different situation, Ishkur. I am the Skylord, supreme lord of the Earth. In the absence of a decision of the Council of the Gods, it is I who make decisions.”

“My lord, may I ask what decision you made in this event?”

“To empty the Frontier, Ishkur, to cleanse it of recalcitrant human mortals.”

Ishkur looked around him. “Do you regard these farmers as more recalcitrant than the horned bandits?”

“The farmers are the problem, not the bandits. Bandits know only loot and rape. As you said, they are not religious. But farmers who come into contact with foreign gods, tend to offer them praises and gifts. This excites the jealous natures of the gods of Sumer. We must keep our black headed people away from foreign gods else I fear we will have another battle of the gods. Such a battle could threaten the very existence of the Earth itself.”

“My lord, your decision seems most unfair to the farmers.”

“It is my decision, Ishkur, therefore it is eminently fair. I will not have the black-headed people chasing after foreign gods.”

“What about Dashan, the goatherd. He is a trader who regularly travels into foreign lands to earn his livelihood.”

“Ah, I suspected as much. I tell you, Ishkur, traders are the worst of the lot. They should be done away with.”

“A thousand pardons, my lord, but I think you are wrong.”

Enlil's eyes widened and his face turned red. He pulled on the reins of the Anzu bird so that it reared high in the sky. From his commanding height, he shouted down to Ishkur, “You dare disagree with the supreme Skylord of the Earth?”

Dashan seized the moment to launch his goats against the remnant of the bandits. “Hek! Hek!” he shouted and the goats started in their direction. Zu-birds, flushed by the ambling goats, flurried into sudden flight beneath the talons of the Anzu bird. The Bird of Heaven, surprised by the sudden panic of the smaller birds, roared and flapped its wings furiously, unseating the mighty Skylord. Enlil fell from the bird and tumbled down into the canal, splashing into the water, not far from Ishkur.

The old mountain god went to help. “My lord -”

The Skylord swam to the bank. Water had straightened his hair and was rivuleting down his face. He growled, “Stay away from me, Ishkur.” He waded out of the canal and climbed up on the bank. “By the gods,” he sputtered, “what a mess. I never realized things had gotten so bad.”

Ishkur followed him. “My lord, if there is anything I can do - ”

“No, dammit! You’ve done more than enough already.” He look up into the sky and called down the Anzu bird. “Come down, Imdigud. Come and get me.”

While Dashan watched, the great Bird of Heaven circled down and landed beside the canal. The magnificent creature crouched down so Enlil could mount. When the Skylord was seated, the bird took several hops and then launched itself into the air. Airborne, it circled the zu-birds while the Skylord shouted at them. When they flew off, Dashan saw that the zu-birds also left, following close behind.

Dashan looked to Ishkur. “The Skylord has flown away with all his birds. What happened?”

The old mountain god grinned. "When Enlil lost his seating, I think he lost his dignity. Besides, his son is somewhere out there on a cloud that's badly deflated. I don't think things have gone well for the Skylord today. I imagine he's winging his way back to Nippur."

"But he left without saying a word."

Ishkur nodded. "That's his way, my son. Moody. I can tell you, the Skylord definitely didn't like the turn of events out here. But you can be sure we'll be hearing from him again. Maybe something like an earthquake ... or another flood."

"That doesn't seem fair."

Ishkur shrugged. "Not much on this Earth is fair. But at least you and your fellow mortals are safe for the moment. Now that the zu-birds have gone, the bandits have been run off by your goats."

"Ah, the farmers can return home with their families and rest."

Ishkur shook his head. "This is not the time for rest, my son. This is the time for rebuilding."

"Rebuilding?" Dashan asked. "It's only a question of time before the bandits attack again. If the farmers don't rest now, when will they ever get the chance?"

"Patience, my son, their day will come. But, for now, they need to get ready for the next bandit attack so they can better defend themselves."

"The gods, my son, like Enlil, may not realize it yet, but even with the help of the bandits, they're losing control of the Earth. The day's coming when the Earth will belong to you and your fellow human mortals. You'll need to have gotten a good grip on it by then. So, go to it."

The End

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2005 2006 2007

About this capture

James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"
Inanna and
the New Lugal

Historical fiction set in Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2003

It was court day. The doorkeeper thumped his staff on the limestone floor and the next petitioner entered the throne room.

She curtsied with no more than a dip before approaching the throne. "My lord, I am Kumumba, keeper of the tavern on the quay -"

Sipaddu interrupted the middle-aged woman. "Yes, Kumumba, I recognize you. We frequent your tavern often. Why have you come to a grievance hearing?"

"Because, my lord, I have a complaint. The palace has stopped paying me for beer drunk at my tavern."

"You're not being paid?"

"No longer, my lord. In the past two weeks, I've not received a shekel."

"We will see about this," Sipaddu assured the woman. There had been numerous

celebrations at her tavern during the past two months. Why had Bartan stopped paying the woman? He sent the doorkeeper to summon his sukkal.

Bartan appeared and bowed. "My lord, you wanted me?"

"This woman, Kumumba, keeper of the tavern on the quay, claims she has not been paid for the past two weeks."

The sukkal blushed. "An oversight, my lord."

"Then let her be paid!"

"My lord," Bartan said, "we need to confer ..." he leaned forward to whisper in Sipaddu's ear, "... in private."

"Now? In the middle of court day? Is it necessary?"

"Absolutely, my lord. Never more so than at this moment. Now!"

Sipaddu nodded and turned back to the innkeeper. "My apologies, Kumumba, but an urgent matter of state has just arisen. It is necessary I adjourn today's session. When you return next week, your account will be paid in full – to the last shekel."

Kumumba mumbled, obviously disappointed, but she acquiesced with an audible "My lord," and remembered to curtsy again as she left.

When she was gone, Sipaddu had the doorkeeper bolt the doors shut and tell other petitioners to come back next week. He then turned his attention to Bartan. "Why have we ceased paying the woman's bills? I go drinking in her tavern almost every night."

"Yes, with your friends."

"True. We are celebrating my accession to the throne. It is not good to drink alone."

"My lord, you and your friends have been celebrating night after night. For two long months."

"Who am I to restrain the joy of my people?"

"Celebrating in a tavern is expensive."

"There is the city treasury, is there not?"

"No longer, my lord. You have drained the treasury. It is now empty."

“How can that be? Where are my chests of gold?”

“Your chests are still there but the gold is gone—used to pay your army.”

“And chests of silver?”

“You gifted the silver to the ladies of the wall. Remember?”

“And my chests of copper ... ?”

“Paid to the tavern for beer drunk in your celebrations last month. My lord, the chests are all now empty. I must warn you, the end of your reign may be at hand.”

“It cannot be!” Sipaddu declared. “I have been lugal scarcely two months. There must still be money in Dabrum.”

“There is, my lord, in the Temple of Inanna.”

“Ah, my good sukkal. Go and get it for me.”

Bartan’s eyes opened wide. “My lord, I can’t just walk in a temple of the goddess and take it. That would be sacrilege.”

“You refuse to follow an order of your lugal?”

“I refuse to cause the curse of Inanna to fall on the head of my lugal.”

“Bah. You are overly superstitious, Bartan. I will find someone not so gullible. Go. I will summon you when I need you.”

>>

Dan-Inanna brought the news. “My lady, your temple at Dabrum has been seized.”

Inanna put down her breakfast fig, licked her fingers and sat upright on her couch. It wasn’t often her chief priest came into her bedroom unannounced. “By whom?” she asked.

“The lugal of Dabrum. His army entered your temple yesterday and took it over.”

The goddess laughed nervously. “I wouldn’t have thought old Purig-Dabrum capable of such action.”

Dan-Inanna shook his head. "It wasn't old Purig-Dabrum, my lady. Old Purig was overthrown two months ago. A new lugal sits on the throne of Dabrum."

"Remind me."

"Sipaddu, a donkey master. He gathered an army in the hills and seized the city."

"And who appointed him lugal of Dabrum?"

"After exiling Purig-Dabrum, my lady, he proclaimed himself the new lugal."

"A headstrong mortal."

"So it seems."

"How did you learn of my temple's seizure?"

"A fire message last night, received from your temple at Zabalam."

"My staff at the Dabrum temple in Dabrum, do you know what's become of them?"

"All safe, my lady. Apparently, Sipaddu's troops were exceedingly noisy. Your temple staff became aware of their approach and escaped, fleeing south to Zabalam."

"Good. But we need deal with this upstart lugal. Tonight, Dan-Inanna, have our fire tower send the message, Dabrum is placed under interdict. No ships are to moor at her quay. I will curse any ship that trades with Dabrum. I will see that it is utterly destroyed."

"It shall be done as you command, my lady."

>>

Sipaddu summoned his sukkal. Bartan came running.

"My lord."

"Go to the port inspector, Bartan, and have him seize the biggest ship moored at our quay."

"My lord, the ship's owner is sure to protest. You have enough troubles already."

"Nonsense. Have the port inspector inform the owner Dabrum is being placed under interdict. By dawn, his boat will be of no use to him, unable to leave port without risk of

destruction. Have the inspector promise the owner we will pay him well for the use of his boat.”

“As you will, my lord.”

“Then, tonight, have it filled with precious metals—all our gold, silver and copper.”

“My lord, you well know our treasury chests are empty. We have none.”

“No? Need I remind you my army has taken control of the Inanna temple?”

“You would take treasury from the temple of the goddess?”

“Every shekel’s worth.”

“But, my lord, that would be theft—sacrilege!”

Sipaddu smiled. “Not in this instance, Bartan. You can rest easy. It is my intent to ship the temple valuables to Inanna at Uruk.”

“How, my lord? We are under interdict.”

“Inanna is busy and acts slowly. Uruk is only a few days downwater from us.”

“My lord, things are already bad. Would it not be wiser to let them be?”

“Need I remind you, Bartan, that I did not become lugal by letting things be?”

“Where’s the gain if you take from Inanna’s temple only to give it back to her?”

Sipaddu smiled again. “That is my concern, Bartan, not yours. Now, go to the harbor master and have him secure the boat. Then, come back for we have another job to do.”

“What else, my lord?”

“We’re going to rebuild the Inanna Temple as an offering to the goddess.”

Sipaddu’s sukkal shook his head. “My lord, I cannot believe my ears. I –”

“Go, Bartan! Have the harbor master take possession of the boat.”

“Yes, my lord. I’m already on my way.”

>>

The freighter left Dabrum the next morning, filled with valuables from the temple. A zu-bird patrol sighted it and followed. The boat traveled by daylight and moored at night. In four days, the ship sailed down the Iturungal from Dabrum to the White Quay at Uruk, which was Inanna's most holy quay. That was where the vessel moored.

Not only did the zu-birds arrive in a great flap to inform the goddess, and the harbor master rush to the Eanna Temple to tell her, but she witnessed the mooring herself from the roof of her temple. She saw the crew disembark. "How dare they!" she exclaimed to Dan-Inanna. "They have defiled my holy quay! Now they come ashore to defile my city."

Her high priest advised her, "Dabrum is under interdict and you have proclaimed any ship sailing from there would be destroyed. Is it not time for Anu to strike? Let him strike and teach them what happens when they disobey his beloved goddess."

"Dan-Inanna, for four days, I have been waiting for Anu to strike. Where is he?"

"Up in Heaven. On some important matter as I recall."

"His wife, no doubt." Inanna gritted her teeth. "He's never around when I need him."

"Call to him, Inanna. He dare not refuse to heed your voice."

Inanna cupped her hands and called up to Heaven. "Anu, hear me. After seizing my temple, Sipaddu, self-proclaimed lugal of Dabrum, has sent a boat to Uruk, violating the interdict I imposed on his city. His ship sits moored at my holy quay, defiling it. Unleash a lightning bolt, my lord. Let it strike his ship and smash it to smithereens. Decree the destiny of his vessel to be as if it had never been."

Inanna stood by Dan-Inanna and watched as the sky thickened. A dark cloud formed overhead and the sound of thunder was heard. Then a bolt of lightning, brighter than the sun, zagged down from the cloud and struck the boat moored at the White Quay. The vessel exploded, flying into a myriad bits, none larger than a mote of dust.

When the sky cleared and water calmed, nothing remained of the boat. It was as if it had never existed.

"There, my priest, Anu has done the deed. Let us go inside and refresh ourselves."

>>

Soon after they were in the temple, an acolyte came to announce the arrival of the captain and his crew. "My lady, the captain seeks an audience with you."

“Some nerve,” Inanna said.

“Why not grant him an audience?” Dan-Inanna asked. “It could be amusing.”

The idea tickled Inanna and she asked the acolyte to show them in.

The captain introduced himself and the two members of his crew. “We have just arrived from Dabrum, my lady. We bring you good news. Your temple in Dabrum is being remodeled and enlarged.”

Inanna’s eyes opened wide. “What? My temple at Dabrum is being rebuilt?”

“Yes, my lady, as a gift from Sipaddu, lugal of Dabrum. But the temple staff became frightened and fled, so we brought you the temple valuables for safekeeping.”

“You mean they were on the boat you just arrived on?”

“Safe in its hold, my lady. The ship is moored at your quay in the harbor.”

“Are the temple valuables still onboard?”

The captain nodded. “As far as I know, my lady, every last one. Our lugal made sure everything was loaded—so nothing would be lost.”

“Captain,” she cried out, “a storm came!”

He looked at his sailors and they shrugged. “We saw no sign of one.”

“It was brief,” the goddess explained, “no more than a cloud and a single bolt of lightning. I’m afraid, captain, your boat has been completely destroyed.”

“Completely?” he asked. “Nothing left?”

“I saw it happen,” Inanna said. “I assure you there’s nothing left.”

“That means your treasure ... ”

Inanna sighed. “Yes, misfortune has befallen both of us.”

“My lady,” the captain exclaimed, “without my ship, I have no livelihood!”

“Be at ease, captain. We will see your boat is replaced.” She turned to her high priest. “Have these men fed and order our temple administrator to secure another vessel for them. When that’s done, Dan-Inanna, come and join me on the roof.”

>>

The high priest climbed the stairs to the roof and came out as the goddess was arguing with her lover.

The deep voice of Anu boomed down from Heaven. "You were too impetuous again, Inanna! You always are. It's like when you went down into the Netherworld. "

"Anu, I never dreamt what would happen. Besides, you're always away when I need you. Was it your wife again?"

"Inanna, I have things to tend to besides you. I decreed the destiny of the boat, exactly as you requested. It is as if the ship had never existed. What's done cannot be undone."

"I've lost all the valuables from my temple at Dabrum. Sipaddu is at work rebuilding my temple and enlarging it. What will I do?" she asked.

"My dear, you will have no choice. When Sipaddu is ready to turn over the rebuilt temple to you, you will have to travel to Dabrum to properly receive it. During the ceremony, you will have to smile and thank him for his generosity. He, in turn, will probably request you crown him lugal of Dabrum."

Inanna gritted her teeth. "I have been undone."

"My dear, it is you who have undone yourself."

>>

Bartan came into the throne room. "The chests in the city treasury are full again, my lord, filled with many items of precious metals. But they resemble objects from the temple."

Sipaddu nodded. "That's because they are from the temple. On the first night, while the zu-birds roosted, we loaded the temple valuables aboard the ship we seized. In the morning, it sailed for Uruk. The zu-birds followed the boat all the way but, when they nested at night. So we briefly moored the boat the first night out and unloaded the temple treasures into panniers on the backs of my donkeys. It was they who carried the valuables back to Dabrum."

Bartan drew back. "Pardon the question, my lord, but is that not stealing?"

Sipaddu shook his head. "No, my good sukkal, when the goddess saw our ship dock at her quay, having sailed from Dabrum after being placed under interdict, she flew into a rage and had it struck by a lightning bolt. The ship and all its contents were utterly destroyed, as if they never had been."

"So now that the treasure's unclaimed, it's ours?"

"Yes, my sukkal."

Bartan's eyes expressed admiration for his lugal. "You are most clever, my lord."

"Thank you."

"But, my lord, I must caution you. You are playing a dangerous game with the gods. Next time, they will be more aware."

The new lugal of Dabrum smiled.

The End

Go Back to the Fiction Menu

Sipaddu, a nomad from the desert, brought his donkeys with him when he settled on frontier lands between the mountains and the Iturungal. He used his animals to transport goods across the heights, befriending mountain men. The day came when he recruited an army in the hills and rode down with them. He seized Dabrum, a small port on the Iturungal Canal, and proclaimed himself the town's new lugal.

1

<http://www.jameswbell.com/si002revenge.html>

12 captures

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About this capture

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Revenge!

Historical Fiction set in Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2003

Dan-Inanna touched on the subject gingerly. “A thousand pardons, my lady, but you appear extremely discomfited.”

Inanna glared at her high priest. “I am. I’m furious at Sipaddu for the trick he played on me. Now this self-proclaimed lugal claims he’s remodeling my temple and I will be invited to its opening. If I go, he’ll likely ask me to crown him lugal of Dabrum. I am angry, Dan-Inanna. That scoundrel’s tricked me once and is preparing to trick me again.”

“My lady, there are ways to stop him. Sipaddu exhibits a fondness for drink and is enamored of young women. You have the love goddess at your call. Why not send her to Dabrum to teach this Sipaddu a lesson? She’s young and might enjoy the challenge.”

Inanna smiled. “Indeed, my priest, Nanay might. Send her to me.”

>>

The doorkeeper thumped the floor with his staff and the love goddess entered the throne room, clad in a gown of diaphanous linen. “My lady, you sent for me?”

“Yes, Nanay, I have a mission that may interest you. A challenge. I seek revenge against a hard hearted man.”

“You wish me to stoke his fire and let him smolder? Break his heart? Who is he?”

“Sipaddu, the self-proclaimed lugal of Dabrum.”

“A man of no little importance. What has he done to incur your wrath?”

“He’s a wastrel. He squandered the city’s treasury and then seized my temple for its wealth. After I put the city under interdict, he sent me a message by boat. It moored at my dock, defiling it. As the ship had violated the interdict, I had Anu destroy it. After its destruction, the captain came to me and claimed Sipaddu was remodeling my temple and that he had sent me the temple valuables aboard the ship for safekeeping.”

“So, the temple treasures were on the vessel Anu destroyed?”

“I doubt it, but that’s what the captain said. Who knows? All was destroyed.”

“How devious the man sounds. You wish me to go to Dabrum and trick him in turn?”

“Yes, Nanay. By the gods, I thirst for revenge. Spin a web of deceit about him so he entangles himself, and finds himself trapped. I want him to suffer like he’s made me suffer.”

Nanay smiled. “My lady, I would find it exquisite to meet this self-proclaimed lugal, tease him and then break his heart.”

“Then go, Nanay. Go to Dabrum and humble the mighty Sipaddu for me.”

“By your leave, my lady.” She turned to leave. “He’ll rue the day he was born.”

>>

Bartan hurried into the courtyard where the lugal rested in a hammock hung between stately palms. “My liege.”

Sipaddu turned his head toward his approaching sukkal. “Yes, Bartan, what is it?”

“A young lady waits in the antechamber, my lord, a woman who claims to be a goddess. She requests an immediate audience with the lugal.”

“A woman, you say? What sort of woman? And, where is she from?”

“A young woman, my lord, very pretty. Just arrived from Uruk, by private boat.”

Sipaddu was reluctant to interrupt his afternoon rest but, goddess or not, a woman traveling by private boat must possess great wealth. He sat up. “Do you find her beautiful?”

“Indeed, I’ve never seen such beauty.”

That did it. Sipaddu rose and arranged his robe so it hung well. “Bartan, despite this being my usual time of rest, I will put my well-being aside and grant this woman an audience. Bring her to me.”

“Yes, my lord.”

Sipaddu’s sukkal left to return in minutes with the traveler. She was all that Bartan said, a beautiful young woman with dark almond-shaped eyes and lips the color of pomegranates. Her hair was styled in ringlets that flounced when she walked. Her dress was an off-shoulder tunic of sheerest linen that exposed a voluptuous right breast. She was beyond compare.

“Welcome,” Sipaddu greeted her.

Nanay smiled, showing the whiteness of her teeth. “My lord, you must be the lugal of Dabrum.”

“Yes, I am Sipaddu. And you are ...?”

“Nanay, my lord, the goddess of love. I have just arrived from Uruk.”

Sipaddu’s heart quickened. “Can one as young and as innocent looking as you be the goddess of love?”

“Indeed, my lord.” She went to one of the sesame lamps inset in the courtyard wall and touched it with the tip of her finger. The wick ignited and flared into flame.

Sipaddu was impressed. “My lady, what brings you to our city?”

The goddess sauntered up to him. She looked him in the eye and said, “You.”

“Me?” Sipaddu asked as if he hadn’t heard her and she nodded. “My lady, why me?”

“Because,” she answered. She circled him, eyeing him. “I’ve heard of you and your invincible army of mountain men. I’ve also heard you have a way with women.”

“My lady, where have you heard such things?”

“In Uruk, my lord. Your fame has become widespread. Visitors to my chamber of love regale me with stories about you.” She looked at him and licked her lips. “You are reputed to be exceptionally skilled in the art of love, one who understands the uses of passion and knows the ways of giving pleasure to a woman.”

In spite of his determination to remain aloof, Sipaddu felt his pulse quicken and his member harden. "Truly, my lady, is that what they say about me?"

Nanay nodded. "There are countless stories. My lord, you sound like a modern day Gilgamesh. I had to come see for myself."

Sipaddu preened and silently cursed himself for not wearing one of his more elegant court robes. "What would the goddess of love like to see?"

"An exhibition of your prowess, my lord. Being a goddess, I have had a hundred thousand lovers. But I've tired of them and seek someone new, an extraordinary man, strong and virile but able to subdue a woman without force. Perhaps, my lord, someone like you."

"I admit, my lady, I am such a man. I am not only strong, but powerful. I gathered an army of mountain men and conquered Dabrum with scarce more effort than lifting a finger. Since then, I have devoted myself to pleasuring the women of this city."

The goddess of love raised an eyebrow. "Ah, so I've heard. But I seek proof."

"What would you consider proof, my lady? Would the goddess of love like to question one of the women I've befriended?"

"My lord, I should prefer to see you in action."

"I have a spare room, stay the night with me. A woman has been invited for this evening, one I plan to entertain in the courtyard. There's no reason you can't watch."

"But, my lord, the woman invited may be one already charmed by you. I was thinking of a more daring challenge, a challenge worthy of a lugal such as yourself."

"My lady, why make lugalship more difficult?"

Nanay smiled. "Because, my lord, a goddess doesn't offer herself to every lugal."

In spite of his caution, Sipaddu found himself intensely interested. "What challenge would the goddess of love propose?"

"I believe the general of your army has a daughter. One who is still single?"

"He does. Her name is Zadina. But she takes after her father, big as an ox."

"I should like to see you please this Zadina."

“But, my lady, I told you, she’s the daughter of the general of my army.”

“That would make it all the more challenging, my lord, would it not?”

“Well –”

“Dear Sipaddu, if you seek to be my lover, you must prove yourself. Invite this Zadina to your palace tonight and let me see how you please her.”

“Is there no other way?”

“Really. My lord, if you’re no longer interested in sampling my delights, tell me now and allow me to return to Uruk. There’s no sense in wasting time ...”

“But, my lady, I am interested! Truly. Everything shall be as you wish. I will cancel tonight’s engagement and invite Zadina instead. You can secrete yourself in one of the groves of palms and watch. I will prove my love for you.”

“Thank you, my lord.”

>>

Zadina arrived, heavily robed. She pulled the bell cord at the palace gate and Bartan, awaiting her arrival, let her in. “I am Zadina,” she said. “I am here by invitation.”

“Yes, my lady, the lugal waits in the courtyard. Allow me to show you the way.”

>>

When Zadina entered the courtyard, she bowed awkwardly and said, “My lord, I have come as you requested.” She pulled off the heavy wool robe that enveloped her and handed it to Bartan who took it into the palace.

Although she was dressed in a tunic of bleached wool, her appearance was worse than Sipaddu remembered. She was squat, squarely built like a boundary stone, and probably weighed as much.

But Sipaddu knew Nanay was watching and hastened to greet her. “Zadina, welcome! I met you just after we captured the city, but haven’t seen you since. It’s been too long. Come,” he said and offered his hand, “join me under the palms.”

Zadina let Sipaddu take her hand and lead her to a bench set in a grove. As she sat down, she said, "My lord, your invitation surprised me. What business have we?"

"There's no business tonight, Zadina. Here," he said, indicating the pot before them, "we have a whole pot of beer and a whole night in which to share it."

"My lord, what are you suggesting?"

Sipaddu offered her a straw for the beer. "Zadina, your father is the general of my army. He is a man of stature, a fine man."

She tried a sip of beer. "Yes, I am proud of him. I am fortunate to be his daughter."

"I, on the other hand, am the lugal of Dabrum." Sipaddu hesitated. "Without a wife."

"Oh?"

He waved a hand in the air. "I was thinking, a union of two families ..."

"Are you perhaps speaking of the lugal and the daughter of his general ...?"

"Such an idea has its possibilities."

"But—my lord, I find this totally unexpected!"

Sipaddu reached for her hand again and held it. "Is my idea so bad? I had thought — tonight - we might see how well we get along together."

"Oh," Zadina said. Then she blushed. "I'd never considered the possibility, my lord. I know I am not an attractive woman."

"Yes, Zadina, but you are strong," Sipaddu said and used his other hand to enclose hers. "A powerful lugal, like me, would require a strong queen ... a woman like you."

"Yes, my lord. Now that you mention it, I can see it. I am strong." She squeezed his hand and he had to brace himself to keep from wincing.

"Zadina, that's what attracted me to you." He leaned closer to her and touched her upper arm. "You have strong arms, too."

"By the gods," she exclaimed. His face suddenly filled her vision, a thing she had never experienced before. Before she knew what happened, she found herself in his arms, her body pressed against his, his mouth on hers. She relaxed and let him kiss her.

After the kiss, she said, "But, my lord, I am so plain."

“But so well formed,” he said. He reached out and touched the fullness of her breast. “You would make a good mother of princes and princesses.”

She didn’t try to push his hand away. “Oh, my lord, I would like children.”

Again, she found herself in his arms and his lips on hers.

A commotion arose. “You can’t come in!” Bartan shouted.

“Damn you!” a loud voice shouted. “I’ve come to see what’s happening to my daughter!”

Zadina looked up, pulled out of the embrace, and shouted, “Father!”

“Zadina! What has Sipaddu done to you?”

“I’ve done nothing!” Sipaddu exclaimed.

“You’re reminding me of Gilgamesh,” the general said and raised his spear.

“Father, stop! My lord has suggested marriage.”

“Marriage? To whom?”

“To me, father, to me. He and I.”

“Well, -” Sipaddu started to say.

“My little Zadina,” the general said and then turned to Sipaddu. “When my daughter came to the palace alone tonight, my lord, I thought something might be afoot and called out the army. Because of my mistrust, I had the palace surrounded, as you can see.”

Sipaddu looked up. Dozens of soldiers were positioned atop the courtyard walls, spears in hand.

The general spoke again. “My lord, I trust your offer of marriage is sincere.”

Sipaddu gulped. “Totally sincere. Of course, it would need your blessing.”

“My lord,” the general said, “please forgive me. I was afraid you were readying to take advantage of my daughter and I was preparing to overthrow you.” He wrapped an arm around Sipaddu’s shoulder. “But now I see our families are to be joined. Of course you have my blessing. Come, let us select a date for the happy event.”

>>

After the date for the wedding was set and the general left with his daughter, Nanay emerged from a grove of palms and shook her head. "I'm sorry, my lord."

"What do you mean, you're sorry? You saw me. I charmed Zadina."

"My lord, I saw you propose. You told her father that. Zadina accepted, her father blessed the union and now, my lord, you are engaged to be married."

"My lady, it was all in an attempt to become your lover."

Nanay shook her head again. "My lord, you just got through promising yourself to someone else. How can you be my lover?"

"For a short time? Perhaps this evening? Stay the night," he begged.

"No, Sipaddu. I'm the goddess of love, not one to disrupt marital bliss. Since you have pledged yourself to another, I think it's best I leave."

"Why? There's been no wedding, no oath given. And I'm feeling no bliss."

"Don't worry, Sipaddu, you'll get used to it. Goodbye, my lord."

Sipaddu watched the love goddess depart. Left alone, the lugal put his head down on his arms and cursed his fate.

The End

Go Back to the Fiction Menu

With an army of mountain men, Sipaddu seized Dabrum, a small port on the Iturungal, and proclaimed himself lugal. Dissipating the town's treasury, he seized Inanna's Temple for its wealth so the goddess put the city under interdict. Sipaddu sent her word by ship he was remodeling her temple. As the ship violated the interdict, Inanna had it destroyed. She was later told the temple treasury had been onboard.

1

<http://www.jameswbell.com/si003counterstroke.html>

13 captures

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About this capture

James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"
Counterstroke

Historical fiction set in Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2003

"Bartan, I seek vengeance!"

Sipaddu's sukkal cringed. "Against Nanay? My lord, careful. Nanay is a goddess. Further, she is protected by Inanna—a bigger goddess."

Sipaddu suddenly stilled, tensed like a lion preparing to strike. "What, Bartan?" His sukkal shrank and looked confused. "Again, man. Repeat what you said."

"My lord, I said Nanay is protected by Inanna, an even bigger goddess."

Dabrum's lugal thumped his fist into the palm of his hand. "By Nin! That's it!"

"What, my lord?"

"Inanna and this business with Zadina. It was she who sent Nanay to trick me. It's because of her, I'm married to my general's homely daughter. Ever since, the general has watched me like a hawk. Bartan, I live in misery. I'm going to repay Inanna for all

the trouble she's caused."

"I remind you," my lord, "she is very powerful."

Sipaddu smiled, showing his teeth. "Don't worry, my good sukkal, I have the perfect plan. But, I'll need your help. I want you to travel to Inanna's temple in Uruk and put it into operation."

"Yes, my lord, if that is your wish."

>>

Dan-Inanna found the goddess lounging in the temple courtyard, reclining in a grove of cassia bushes, inhaling the fragrance of their rich cinnamon bark and enjoying the butterflies they attracted. "My lady, I hesitate to intrude."

Inanna turned to her chief priest. "My good priest, you never interrupt unless the matter is pressing. What is it?"

"A man has arrived by boat, my lady, one who says he is sukkal to that unspeakable lugal of Dabrum." Dan-Inanna arched an eyebrow. "He claims he brings a personal message and is bound by oath to deliver it only to you."

"Don't worry. Sipaddu has already taught me a lesson in trickery. I stay on guard. Bring his sukkal to me. I wish to talk with him."

"As you wish, my lady."

>>

The high priest returned with Bartan, a man obviously well prepared. He made a formal bow as he entered the courtyard.

Inanna took a moment to study him. After all, he was Sipaddu's sukkal, his personal advisor. The man was of medium height, more Sumerian than Amurru, possibly a native of Dabrum. He was gowned in an impressive robe of bleached wool. His steady eye and prominent chin revealed him to be a man of determination.

"Welcome to the Eanna Temple, my good sukkal," Inanna said. "I'm told you come bearing a message for me."

"Glorious Goddess, I am Bartan, sukkal to Sipaddu the Magnificent, lugal of Dabrum. I bring you his greetings and his wishes for your continued happiness."

"Thank you, my good man. Take back to your lugal my wishes for his continued happiness. He is happy now that he is married, is he not?"

"Ah - yes, my lady. Marriage has ... it has helped him focus his mind."

"Splendid." Inanna smiled. "What favor does the magnificent one seek today?"

The sukkal flinched. "My lady, please - do not jest. My lord may have assumed an exceptional title, but his people have accepted it."

"Good. Then, tell me, what message do you bring me?"

"An invitation, my lady. My lord wishes to advise you the remodeling of your temple is almost complete, and desires to set a date for its dedication. Sabattu is the month of good omens for temples and the seventh is a holy day. The work can be completed by then. He inquires if this would be a suitable date for you to attend."

"My good sukkal, I question why I should even consider attending. Do I need remind you that your lugal sent his army to seize my temple? It was taken from me by force."

"My lady, that's the way it may have seemed, but force was never used.. Your temple staff fled before our army arrived. When our soldiers arrived, they found your temple abandoned. Our commander never had the chance to explain his mission."

"Even if that's so, temples are often remodeled. Why is the remodeling of my temple at Dabrum so important? Why should I put urgent tasks aside to attend its dedication?"

"My lady, Sipaddu is not named 'Magnificent' without reason. His remodeling of your temple has made it very impressive, more splendid even than your edifice at Zabalam."

"Really? Dabrum is a much smaller city than Zabalam."

"Yes, but Dabrum has a much greater lugal."

"Sipaddu has tricked me before."

"As I've explained, my lady, you have a misinterpretation of the event. In taking charge of your temple, my lugal sought only to help you."

"I'm sorry, my good man, I cannot bring myself to trust your master."

"What a shame. My lady, what if we sanctified your temple in Dabrum, one that became the talk of the land, and you weren't present at its dedication? You would have forsaken the glory that could have been yours. Also, my lady, your absence may cause

you an irreparable loss of stature, when all I've said could have easily been verified. You have only to send one of your priests to view the remodeling."

Inanna considered the possibility of lowered stature. What to do. Being a goddess in a world of heavy-handed gods wasn't easy. She had worked hard to attain her position and meant to keep it. "My good man, tell your master I'll send Shatatna, high priestess of my Zabalam temple, to inspect the remodeling. If she verifies all you've claimed, then I'll accept his invitation."

Bartan bowed. "Thank you, my lady. I will so inform my lugal."

>>

When Bartan returned, Sipaddu asked, "Did Inanna take the bait?"

"My lord, she promised to send the high priestess of her Zabalam temple to inspect the remodeled temple."

"Excellent! Bartan, you've launched my plan."

>>

Although Sipaddu the Magnificent was a lugal kept busy by many duties, he personally escorted Inanna's high priestess to the marvelous remodeling of Inanna's Temple. It was now an immense structure, built of fired brick on a mount of cut limestone blocks. From the terrace, the face of the temple rose forty cubits, sixty feet in the air, with an arched doorway twelve cubits high. A line of reed mats hung over the top of the temple, high above the entrance, reachable only by a fragile-looking scaffolding made of tamarisk limbs.

As they stood on the Processional Way, in front of the temple, Sipaddu said, "There it is, holy one. The temple is almost finished. Do you find it pleasing?"

"It is magnificent, my lord. Inanna told me your sukkal described it as wonderful, but I think this is more regal than she ever dreamed."

"Then, you think the goddess will find it pleasing too?"

"Definitely." Shatatna surveyed the monumental structure. "But, why are those mats hanging down from the top?"

"To hide a mural, holy one, an artistic work done in glazed brick. It is a masterpiece. I'm keeping it secret – until the day of dedication."

“Oh?” Shatatna said. Her tone of voice indicated suspicion.

“But, for you, holy one, I’ll let you have a peek. Come with me,” he said and led the way up the stairs to the temple mount. “We’ll have to climb the scaffold.”

Shatatna looked at the flimsy tamarisk limbs tied together with rough cordage of coarse palm fiber. “My lord, why not send a workman up instead?”

“And let him see the mural? Please, holy one, I want it kept a secret. So far, no one but the artist and I have seen it. Today, I’m sharing it only with you.”

“Thank you, my lord, but I think I’ll stay down here and view it.”

“As you wish,” Sipaddu said. He went to the scaffolding and carefully began to climb. Up and up he went till he was five stories above the terrace. Reaching out, he grabbed a cord and pulled down a corner of the reed mat on the left, letting it drop part way so the figure of Inanna, Queen of Heaven, was revealed.

Shatatna gasped.

“What do you think of it?” he called down.

“It’s beautiful,” the high priestess answered. “A work of art. The goddess will be immensely pleased.”

“My image is on the other side,” the lugal said and shuffled along the scaffolding to lower the mat on the other side when, suddenly, the singing of men was heard. “Listen, the workers are returning. My lady, to save the unveiling for the dedication, I’ll have to cover it again.”

“I understand,” Shatatna said.

Sipaddu pulled the mat back up and reattached it before gingerly climbing down. Reaching the terrace, he asked, “Will you recommend Inanna come to the dedication?”

“My lord, after what I’ve seen and intend to report, I don’t think anything could keep her away.”

“Thank you, holy one. Come, let us celebrate with a feast before you depart.”

>>

After Shatatna left, Bartan came to see Sipaddu. “Well, my lord, was the high priestess

impressed by the remodeling of the temple?"

"Bartan, Shatatna loved it. She's going down to Uruk to tell Inanna about it."

"Do you think the Queen of Heaven will attend the dedication?"

"If Shatatna has anything to do with it, I'm sure she will."

"The dedication will be something, my lord. It could be the event of the century."

"Yes, my name will go down in history."

"But, my lord, don't forget about afterwards. Inanna is going to be furious. She will seek retribution."

"Let her. My good sukkal, I have an army of experienced mountain men who are afraid of nothing. What has the goddess got to compare?"

>>

Inanna questioned her high priestess, "Tell me, Shatatna, now that you've seen the temple Sipaddu is supposedly remodeling for me, what did you think of it?"

"It's beautiful, my lady. It's much larger than you had given me leave to believe and decorated in cedar and silver. I found it awe-inspiring."

"Will it increase my stature? And bring me glory?"

"Indeed, my lady. There's a mural of you on the front, done in glazed tile by a master craftsman. It has highlights of gold and silver. It is an artistic revelation of your divine beauty."

"But I'm still concerned about trickery."

"My lady, the temple is marvelous. You can hardly afford not to go."

"Even though I worry about Sipaddu?"

"What could a mortal like him do that wouldn't be soon forgotten? The temple is a wonder. It is forever. It would serve as an eternal monument to your greatness."

"Yes, I see that now. You said the dedication is to be ... ?"

"On the seventh day of Sabattu, my lady."

>>

The seventh of Sabattu was a day like no other. The sun was bright and Inanna, Queen of Heaven, arrived on a ship bedecked in garlands. She was met at the quay by Sipaddu the Magnificent, who arrived in the royal cart drawn by a pair of donkeys.

They rode together in the cart down the Processional Way to the site of the remodeled temple, on its majestic limestone platform. Together, they ascended the broad stairs to the mount, where they stood in front of the great cedar doors that gated the temple.

The entire city turned out to see the dedication. Thousands more came from nearby Adab and Zabalam, and still more from as far away as the holy city of Nippur.

Sipaddu spoke first. "My friends," he addressed the throng, "thank you for coming to help dedicate this remodeled temple to Inanna, the Queen of Heaven. Though she is immortal, as all deities are, she is earthborn, therefore one of us, one who has gained her high position by dedication and hard work. This temple has been remodeled to celebrate her many accomplishments. Help me welcome the Queen of Heaven to its dedication."

Cheers went up for Inanna and she stepped forward to the edge of the mount to address the audience. "Friends, hard work can accomplish much, as Sipaddu proves. He was an Amurru, a lowly donkey master in the desert. He came to the frontier, where he settled, and is now lugal of Dabrum. I have been amazed at how much he has done. This remodeled temple is one of his finer accomplishments and I am here today to celebrate with him."

Again, the audience cheered.

After Inanna gave a blessing, Sipaddu said, "And now, the dedication." He pulled on the cords that held the reed mats covering the upper part of the temple face and they fell away. On the left, the image of Inanna was revealed, pictured in glazed brick, a figure twenty feet high. On the other side, there was the image of Sipaddu done in glazed brick, his figure also twenty feet high.

The mural's grandeur drew a collective gasp from the crowd.

But Inanna swirled to Sipaddu and hissed, "You've made your image the same height as mine!"

Sipaddu grinned. "My lady, we are alike. We are both self-made, are we not?"

"Bah! You know I am an immortal while you're no more than a short-lived mortal. My

image should have been at least twice as big as yours.”

”My lady, you are about to make a scene in front of thousands. Are you going to accept this remodeled temple graciously with smiles or is the crowd going to witness a divine fit of temper?”

”You bastard! You planned this!”

”It’s no worse than you sending Nanay to trick me into getting married for life.”

”You’ll pay for this outrage!”

”Do you want to finish the dedication, or shall I call it off and dedicate the temple to a god more deserving? At least one I can work with? Maybe Ereshkigal?”

Inanna choked down jealous rage at the mention of her sister. She put on a smile and turned back to the crowd and addressed them. “It is indeed a beautiful temple, a welcomed addition to my worshippers as well as to your city. I thank all of you.”

Again, the crowd broke into cheers.

>>

At dinner, when Bartan came in, Sipaddu asked, “Where’s Inanna?”

”She’s departed, my lord. She was mad as kur. Left Dabrum without a word.”

”I know. She hardly spoke to me after the dedication.”

”My lord, I fear dark days are ahead.”

”Let them come, Bartan. I relish the challenge. As I’ve proved, it’s not without reason that I named myself Sipaddu the Magnificent. Maybe, my good sukkal, I’ll soon be able to award myself the title of Sipaddu the Great.”

The End

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After Sipaddu captured Dabrum, a small city on the Iturungal Canal, he declared himself lugal and seized Inanna's Temple for its wealth. In turn, Inanna sent Nanay, the love goddess, to Dabrum to get revenge. Nanay enticed Sipaddu into a romantic tryst with Zadina, daughter of the general of his army. Caught by Zadina's father, Sipaddu had to marry his daughter and has been suffering ever since.

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/si004onslaught.html>

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About this capture

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

Onslaught

Historical fiction set in Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2003

"I could kill Sipaddu," Inanna confided to her high priest.

"He is a human cockroach," Dan-Inanna said. "One who scurries about when no one's looking. His cleverness is more deceit than skill. Squash him, my lady, and be done."

"If only I could." The goddess sighed. "But it would anger grandfather Enki. To him, all black-headed people ... even Sipaddu ... are his children."

“Then, why not encourage other mortals to take care of him?”

Inanna was immediately interested. “What is it you’re thinking?”

“Sipaddu’s a braggart, a natural target. In addition, having seized your temple’s treasure for himself, he is immensely wealthy, is he not?”

“He’s the richest lugal on the Iturungal. But he’s spent part on city improvements, like remodeling my temple.”

“That makes Dabrum all the riper for plunder.”

“Go on ... I’m listening.”

“My lady, the Hursag is not far distant. The mountains are filled with bandits, an avaricious lot, prone to attack. Your temple in Dabrum has been defiled but it’s still yours to do with as you wish. Give it to the bandits. Let them have it and you’ll need do no more.”

“Yes, why not? As it is, the temple’s useless to me. Find me a messenger, Dan-Inanna, one I can send to the Hursag, a man capable of finding the chief of the brigands.”

> >

Bartan spotted his lugal on the city wall and called up, “How goes it, my lord?”

“Well, good sukkal.” Sipaddu looked at his advisor standing on the ground twelve cubits below—a good eighteen feet. “Come up and see what we’ve done. When our workers finish, this wall will be invincible.”

Bartan climbed the stairs and surveyed the heightened bulwark. “Remarkable, my lord, though it seemed sufficient as it was.”

“Against a goddess like Inanna?”

“Surely, you don’t expect a personal attack.”

“No, she would worry Father Enki would find out. But there’s no telling what else she might do. I fear a calamity and am preparing. In case of siege, we can draw water from the canal. I’ve also had the temple granaries filled.”

“My lord, won’t the goddess be angry at having her temple commandeered?”

"How will she know? Since I added my image to the temple, she's believed the building corrupted and refused to staff it."

"My lord, why not seek help from neighboring cities?"

"Who? Zabalam? Inanna is their goddess. If anything, she would have her high priestess preach a crusade against us. Adab? That city's under the thumb of Lisin, another goddess. I ask you, Bartan, can we expect a goddess to turn on one of her own?"

"Then, my lord, may I suggest we turn to the traders?"

"Bah. They are merchants, a scurvy bunch. Much talk and little action. They care only about profit. They pray the gods leave Earth and return to Heaven, but still worship the earth they walk on. In their eyes, Bartan, I am the evil one, for it was I who dared depict myself the equal of a goddess and thus disrupted harmony in Sumer."

"My lord, are you telling me there is no one to help us?"

"That's just what I'm saying. Whatever may come, Bartan, we'll have to depend on ourselves. It's Sipaddu against Inanna, the lugal against the goddess."

"Forgive me, my lord, but I speak solely for your own protection. You are a great lugal, but still a mortal. Inanna is immortal with powers you may not have dreamed of."

"You forget, my sukkal, that I possess great cunning. I did not become lugal by chance."

"Then, my lord, you have a plan?"

"Of course. Fortunately, we are situated on the Iturungal. To cover the other three sides, I've already sent sentries into the countryside, one to the north, one south and one east, towards the Hursag. The plain is level and a man can see for miles. When a sentry sights the enemy, he is to light his fire and use a mat to control it. The signal is three puffs of smoke by day, three flashes of flame by night. When our watchers see the signal, they will know the enemy is coming, and from which direction. In response, they will light a fire on the city wall to warn the countryside and give the sentries a chance to flee."

"A well-thought plan, my lord."

"Perhaps, my good sukkal, but we must also prepare the city's defense. We need all the men we can get. Send men into the countryside to tell the settlers war is at hand. Let them know fire on the city wall is the signal and, soon as they see it, they are to come to the city with their families. To succeed, we must protect one another."

> >

Humti, the bearded chief of the mountain bandits, returned from a successful hunt. Behind him, men dragged an A-frame holding the body of a freshly-killed mountain lion.

Shushin, his sukkal, ran out from camp to greet him. "Welcome back, brave hunter. I see you have brought us a fine trophy."

"Done with a single thrust," Humti bragged. "I steeled myself. When the lion leapt, I speared him in the throat, leaving his hide whole and unmarred. A prize worth the trouble."

"Well done, Chief, but I must tell you a greater prize awaits."

"Greater than a lion?" The warrior laughed. "By Nin, what could that be?"

"A messenger has arrived, Chief, one sent by the goddess, Inanna herself."

"I have nothing to do with gods or goddesses. What has Inanna to do with me?"

"She has sent a messenger with the offer of a rich gift."

"Such as?"

"Come with me, Chief, and meet the man. Let him speak for himself."

Humti followed his sukkal through the camp, a scattering of huts constructed of oak timbers on platforms of stone. He moved swiftly along the trail, his leather boots silent but his leather pants giving him away, swishing as he followed Shushin to the common.

He saw the figure seated by the cooking fire, a thin man dressed in a flimsy tunic of bleached linen, obviously from the city. He noted the man was unarmed and felt a grudging admiration for the weakling's courage in entering his camp.

"I am Humti," he announced himself to the man. "Chief of the Hursag."

The messenger stood and faced him squarely. "Great Chief, I am Zalilu, envoy from the court of the goddess of Inanna."

"You were sitting by the dinner fire," the chief said. "Why take the seat of a woman?"

"Chief, I thought the oven a kiln. In cities, it's men who use fire to harden pottery and smelt copper, but that's beside the point. I bring you an important message from the

Queen of Heaven.”

“Why should I listen when it was your ladyship who left Aratta and abandoned the mountainlands and my forbearers? I ask you, man of Inanna, why does your goddess seek me when, if I could, I would seize her temple and rob it of its wealth?”

“Chief, that’s why she sent me. She offers you one of her temples as a gift.”

Humti hefted his spear. “Do you take me for a simpleton or a fool?”

“I assure you, most honored Chief, I don’t.”

The bandit put his spear against Zalilu’s chest. “Then, speak man, why would your goddess offer me one of her temples ... one of her sacred places?”

“Because, Great Chief, it is no longer sacred. The lugal of Dabrum has desecrated it. He placed his image on the temple’s face. What use has a goddess for a besmirched temple?”

Humti looked at the circle of bandits gathered around to watch. Some nodded and one spoke out. “Chief, what the city man says is true. I have been to Dabrum and seen, with my own eyes, the lugal’s picture on the temple there.”

Humti withdrew his spear. “But the temple is inside city walls.”

“Dabrum is a small city. It has great wealth and little population, maybe two thousand ... many elderly. I note your mountain men are young and active.”

“Don’t try to fool me. I recall the lugal of Dabrum recruiting both his general and his army from the Hursag.”

“That was long ago. How many are left? And of those, how many have grown pot-bellied drinking beer in taverns along the waterfront?”

Humti hesitated.

“Think, Chief, what your men would do if loosed in a city. Would they not become city men, passing their nights drinking in taverns and whoring at the city wall? Could they resist? In the Hursag, your men hunt and become lion killers. Any one of them could overcome ten men of the city. And you, Honored Chief, where is the general who can match your prowess?”

“That’s true,” Humti said. “I recall now. Sipaddu and his general raised an army of scarcely fifty. I have ten times that many at my command.” The chief gripped Zalilu by the arm. “My friend, you are going to lead us to Dabrum. We’ll leave now and cross

the plain while it's dark. At daybreak, we'll take the city and claim the temple. If all goes as you say, you'll be on your way home on the morrow."

Inanna's envoy had a worried expression. "And, if not?"

Humti drew his finger across his throat.

> >

Bartan interrupted Sipaddu's sleep. "My lord, watchmen on the wall report a fire to the east. It is flashing three times, again and again."

"It's the signal," Sipaddu said. "Bandits coming from the Hursag." He climbed out of bed and reached for his protective suit of padded leather. "Have them light a fire on the wall to let the settlers know. Then have the city gates opened for them and their families."

"Will you order out the army, sire?"

"A part of it. Have General Budum report to me."

> >

Sipaddu addressed his father-in-law. "General, your men know the Hursag well?"

"They do, my lord, they are mountain men."

"A signal fire has been seen to the east. Mountain bandits are on their way to attack the city."

"I am aware, my lord. I have already assembled the army. We will go out and meet them in battle."

"Hold, general, let's use strategy instead. Select a handful of the fittest for a mission. While it's still night, so they can't be seen, send them on a roundabout trek to the mountainlands so they do not meet the armed men headed towards us. Then, post the remainder of your army on the city wall to help defend the city with spears."

"My lord, why not face the enemy? My men are not cowards."

"Because, general, bandits grow careless on the attack. They come running at us, to rush our defense, eager to gain as much loot as possible, leaving their home abandoned

in their haste. Your men, general, will strike their base, destroy it and their supplies.”

General Budum smiled. “Yes, my lord, I see. A good plan. I’ll pick a worthy squad and send them on their way.”

> >

Sipaddu waited on the wall for the enemy to arrive. The city gates had been closed. It was still almost dark, when he heard their approach. Looking down, he made out a mass of men, possibly hundreds, nearing the wall. He took a deep breath and called out, “Who comes to the City of Dabrum?”

A desultory flurry of spears flew up out of the darkness, but fell short, and clattered against the mud city’s wall before falling to the ground. A stout man wearing a horned helmet stepped forward. “I am Humti, Chief of the Hursag. The Temple of Inanna has been given to me by the goddess Inanna. Open the city gates so I may enter and claim my due.”

“Open my city gates to a horde who descend on us at night like a pack of mad wolves? No, I’d sooner welcome fiery demons from the Netherworld.”

“You’ll pay for those words!” The chief shouted at his men and another volley of spears hit the wall.

“As you see, Chief, I have heightened the wall and fortified the city well. The wall is so tall your spears cannot reach us. I can see your scaling ladders are too short. Our wall is invincible. It is useless for you to attack.”

“Then we’ll set up camp and wait you out, till you starve.”

“We starve?” Sipaddu laughed. “Our granaries are filled. But, how will you feed yourselves? I’ve already sent half my army to your camp. When you return home, you will find desolation, your homes burned and your supplies destroyed.”

“By the gods, how did you know we were coming?”

Sipaddu took his time replying. When he did, all he said was, “A lugal knows.”

“I’ve been tricked!” the bandit chief shouted. “The goddess’s messenger will pay for this with his life.” Humti ordered his men to bring Zalilu forward.

Sipaddu saw a scared man dragged forward but said, “He means nothing to me.”

“Then watch him die,” Humti said and ordered one of his men to forward to execute him.

When the man stepped toward Zalilu and drew his sword, Sipaddu lowered his hand and two spears flew towards the swordsman. He fell to the ground, impaled.

“By Nergal, lugal!” Humti shouted. “Your streets will run with blood this morning, your children will become orphans. Charge the gate, men! Break it down.” Armed bandits swarmed towards the thick cedar doors.

Immediately, a shower of spears rained down from the wall and twenty or thirty men crumpled. Then another spate, and another score fell to the ground. The mass hesitated until a third fall of spears persuaded them to withdraw.

Sipaddu looked down on the scene and saw the goddess’s envoy still alive, crawling towards the city gate. “Fast,” he commanded his men, “open the gate. Help that wounded man get inside.”

Once the man was safe inside and the gate closed again, Sipaddu turned back to the bandit army. “Chief of the Hursag, you have already lost a tenth of your men. And you’ve lost the goddess’s envoy. I don’t know what scheme you had, but who do you think the goddess will favor now? Now that I have her personal agent, who will the goddess protect?”

There was no answer. All was silent except for the moans of the wounded rising from the ground below.

“Chief Humti, some of your fallen comrades are still alive. Agree to a truce to end this sorry affair and we’ll let you take your dead and wounded and leave in peace. If not, we’ll pick you off one by one while we watch you slowly shrivel from starvation.”

The chief stepped forward again, but not so close this time. “It seems the gods have turned against us,” he called out. “What choice is left but accept the truce? Will you help us gather our dead and wounded?”

“We remain wary of those who come in the night to attack. Our city gates will remain closed and bolted till you have gone. Hurry, before our patience wears thin.”

The mountain chief turned and ordered his men to gather their fallen comrades.

Before noon, they were gone, headed back towards the Hursag.

> >

“What comes next?” Bartan asked.

Sipaddu shook his head. “I don’t know, my sukkal, but I’m sure the chief will let Inanna

know her ambassador is now in our possession. I suspect we'll be hearing from the goddess before long. I wonder what she'll try."

The End

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When Sipaddu seized the Inanna Temple in Dabrum, he plundered its wealth. For revenge, Inanna tricked him into marrying the homely daughter of the general of his army. In return, Sipaddu remodeled her temple, putting a mural on it with his image fully as large as hers. When the picture was unveiled at the dedication, the goddess left in disgust and swore to put the lugal of Dabrum in his place.

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<http://www.jameswbell.com/dn001thiefofuruk.html>

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About this capture

James W. Bell's

Ancient Sumeria

"In the Days when Gods Walked

Upon the Face of the Earth"

The Thief of Uruk

A story about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2001

I knew him. His name was really Shugat-Nergal.

But everybody called him the Thief of Uruk. In all Sumer, there was no criminal more daring - or more clever.

I know. I'm a watcher at the marketplace for the traders' association called the Karum. My name is Denisha-Ishtar. As you can tell by my name, my mother was Amurru. Amorite. She was raised on the desert in a tent. One day she rode into Uruk with a donkey train, met my father, married him and stayed. Then she had me.

Uruk verges on the desert. They call it Rainbow City because of half-breeds like me who live there. We're not popular. So I grew up on the waterfront, hanging around the quay, meeting sailors and traders plying the Euphrates. Most belonged to the Karum. I learned from them and was damned lucky I didn't get pregnant. What the hell. When I could stand it no longer and decided to get a decent job, I went down to the Karum to sign up.

"You're but a girl," one of the examiners informed me. "This is a man's world. What can you do for us?"

I was prepared for him. I knew I would have to have some special talent to be accepted. So I had developed one. "Observation," I told him. "With my keen eye, I'd be a good watcher. I know the Uruk Market. I'd make you a great undercover watcher in the marketplace."

"By the gods!" that examiner exclaimed. "She's got a point! Who'd suspect a girl of being our watcher in the market?" He enthused the others so they signed me up on the spot. Yata. Like that, I became a member of the Karum and a watcher. Once in a while, being a girl has its advantages.

>>

When my mother heard I'd joined the Karum and intended to walk the streets of the marketplace, she thought I'd taken up prostitution. "I am not a whore," I said. "But I'm not going to argue about it." So I left home and that was that.

Like most Sumerian women, I dress comfortably: sandals, a necklace with my personal seal and a single-strapped wool shift that leaves my right breast uncovered. My breast is well-shaped and attracts a lot of attention. It distracts men, especially the young ones, and that gives me the chance to be a better watcher.

Like I mentioned, Shugat-Nergal was a master thief. I knew his favorite territory was the Uruk market. The first time I saw him operate, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was walking down the street when he stumbled and brushed against a table of necklaces in a jewelry stall. "Sorry," he apologized to the vendor. But I had my eye on his hand and saw three necklaces disappear into his kilt. I charged over to accuse him, but he disappeared before I could reach him. He had vanished, leaving me confused.

The next time, I caught sight of him as he entered the market gate. I was headed towards him when he pulled his stumble trick again and fell against another merchant's table. He lifted another handful of necklaces and stuck them in his kilt. I took out after him. He saw me coming and hardly had time to apologize to the merchant before he took off. As he ran, I saw him pull off his kilt and toss it under a table in an empty stall.

I was amazed to see all the stuff he was wearing underneath his outer kilt, one of those gaudy colored kilts the Amurru love so much. He went into what seemed to be an act. He slumped his shoulders, ruffled his hair and changed his brisk gait to an awkward shuffle. By the gods! Before my eyes, he remade himself into what looked like a drunk Amurru driver from one of the donkey trains.

I easily caught up with him and tapped him on the arm. "I saw those necklaces you took from that merchant's table back in the market," I told him.

He turned around and looked at me with unfocused eyes. "Wha' I did back there?" His body weaved in the air and I thought for a moment he was going to fall. "Miss, if I bumped you, I am shorry. Shorry. Deeply shorry. Miss, I apologize all over the place," he said and knelt down in front of me.

"Don't put on a show with me!" I told him.

He looked up at me with the most distressed eyes I'd ever seen on a man. I must say he was one hell of a good actor. "Wha' show?" he asked throwing out his arms. Immediately, he lost his balance and toppled over on the brick pavement.

Several passersby stopped. "Is he drunk?" one in a robe of bleached wool asked. "Should I call a watchman?"

"By all means," I replied. "This man is a thief. He's stolen necklaces from a merchant's table."

The man started shouting "Watchman! Watchman!" while I stared at the face of the master thief lying on his side in the street. He was looking up, gurgling and rolling his eyes at me.

A watchman arrived. "All right, all right, what's going on here? What seems to be the matter? A domestic quarrel, eh?"

The watchman's remark infuriated me. "I don't even know the damned man!" I informed the officer. "Besides, he's a thief. I watched him steal necklaces off a merchant's table here in the marketplace."

"Is that so?" The watchman turned to Shugat-Nergal lying on the street in his gaudy kilt. "What's the matter with you?"

"I think I had too mush to drink," the thief gurgled.

"Well, get up," the watchman said. "You look disgusting lolling around down there."

“Yes, shir.” Shugat-Nergal clambered to his feet with no little difficulty and then stood stiff before us, his body weaving. He accidentally bumped the watchman. “Shorry.”

“This woman says you took necklaces from a merchant’s table in the marketplace. What have you to say about that?”

Shugat-Nergal held up his hands and rolled his eyes again. “I haven’t anything on me,” he said. “Shee for yourself.” By the gods, I had to admit, he was a fascinating actor.

The watchman felt around the thief’s kilt. “Where’s your moneybag, man?”

“Drank it. Drank it all up.” He put his face in the watchman’s face. “Can’tcha tell?” he asked.

The watchman flinched but stood his ground. “I didna take anything. I am not a thief,” Shugat-Nergal went on. “Thish woman — she owes me an apology, a great big one.”

The watchman turned back to me. “You said you saw this man take necklaces from a table in the marketplace, ma’am?”

“I did. He took them and stuffed them into his kilt.”

The watchman turned back to the accused again. The thief undid his colored kilt and whipped it off, standing stark naked in the marketplace like some slave. He flapped his kilt in the air. “Nothin’s in it,” he said and offered it to the officer.

The watchman took the gaudy kilt and carefully examined it. He turned back to me. “I find nothing in his kilt, ma’am.”

It was more than I could stand. “For god’s sake, give him the damned thing back and tell him to put it on. I tell you, officer, I saw him take necklaces from a merchant’s table. If you’ll come with me into the marketplace, I’ll show you.”

The watchman told Shugat-Nergal, “You come along with us.” They accompanied me back inside the marketplace.

I marched them up to the table where I had seen him take the necklaces. The merchant behind the table looked up hopefully as we approached, but his face turned grim as soon as he noticed the watchman’s harness. “Sir,” the officer asked the merchant, “are you missing some necklaces?”

The merchant nodded. “Unfortunately, yes. Three, I think ... a carnelian and two very expensive lapis.”

“This woman claims she saw this man take necklaces from your table.”

The merchant stared at Shugat-Nergal, shook his head and sighed. "I wish it were so, officer," he said, "but I have to tell you, I've never seen this man before."

"How can you say that?" I asked. "I saw this very man stumble and fall against your table less than a quarter hour ago."

The merchant nodded. "Ma'am, someone did stumble and brush against my table, but it wasn't him. Look at that god-awful kilt he's wearing. I wouldn't let anyone in a kilt like that get close to my goods." He leaned forward. "You know, ma'am," he whispered to me, "I think he's Amurru." I felt my face burn.

Shugat-Nergal chose this moment to come alive. "Shee!" he exclaimed. "She owes me a great big apology!"

"No!" I cried. "Look at his face," I urged the merchant. "When he left the market, he pulled off an outer kilt he was wearing and threw it under an empty table. That gaudy kilt he's in now is a disguise that he was wearing under his kilt. Pay attention to his face."

The merchant took a close-up look at Shugat while he continued to weave. I'd swear Shugat was suppressing a smile. "Looks drunk as hell to me," the merchant said. "I smell beer on his breath."

"By Nin!" I exclaimed. "Come with me. I'll show you!"

The merchant shook his head. "Can't leave my table."

"That's all right, sir," the watchman put in, "the accused and I will accompany this woman."

I led them back the way Shugat had run out of the marketplace, passing two or three empty stalls on the way, including the one with the table I thought he had pitched the kilt under. I looked under it. There was nothing there. To be sure, I got down on hands and knees to search, figuring the kilt might have slid further back.

When I got back up, I conceded defeat. "There seems to be nothing here now."

The watchman raised his eyebrows and turned to Shugat-Nergal. "It seems this woman was mistaken. Do you wish to make a charge, sir? Perhaps a charge of slander?"

Shugat-Nergal straightened up and looked me straight in the eye. He seemed to have made a rapid recovery from his drunken stupor. I held steady and didn't flinch. "Not if she'll retract those nasty things she said about me. And apologize. Nicely ... like a lady."

GRRR. It was one of the hardest things I had ever done. I gritted my teeth. "I cannot produce the missing necklaces," I said. I turned to Shugat-Nergal. "I must have dreamed the whole thing. I apologize to you, ... sir."

Shugat smiled and turned to the watchman. "She's apologized, officer," he said. "We all make a mistake now and then, but it's over. There's no longer any problem."

"So it seems," the officer said and turned to go back to his post at the market gate.

As soon as the watchman left, Shugat turned his attention back to me and his face broke into the grin I'd been watching him suppress. "You're quite the woman," he told me.

"And you're quite the thief," I replied. "This is the second time I've watched you operate."

"The second time - ?"

"I'm an undercover watcher for the Karum here at the market," I said.

Shugat nodded. "Ah," he said, "then you know who I am?"

"Indeed!" I said. "You are the notorious Shugat-Nergal! Better known as the Thief of Uruk."

"Ah, yes," he said and bowed slightly. He smiled, as if he were very pleased to meet me. "And may I ask your name?"

"Denisha-Ishtar," I answered.

"Denisha," he said and eyed me from head to toe. "Nice," he said and I blushed. "Well, you are young but quite a woman." He hummed. "I could use someone like you. We could do well together if you joined me in my ventures."

"A proposition?" I asked. "I'm already self-supporting and lack for nothing. If I continue to do well here in the marketplace, then I may gain a chance to travel the waterways ... perhaps go overseas to places like Meluhha or Ægypt."

"Ah, yes," he said and bowed again, "if you do well here."

"I will have my eye out for you."

"I understand. I wouldn't want to hinder your career."

"And you, Shugat-Nergal?" I asked. "You seem like a decent man in a way. Why not give up your thieving?"

He grinned. "My dear Denisha-Ishtar, for the same reason you won't want to give up your watching. I'm good at it."

"I admit that," I said. "You've learned to control yourself very well. You'd make a wonderful actor. You have a kingly appearance. You could handle the lugal's part in the New Year's Festival. You'd get to go to bed with Inanna, sleep with the goddess."

"I'm flattered you think that. But I hardly believe they'd choose me to play the role of one as important as the lugal."

I shrugged. "In festivities, it's appearance that counts. Whatever else, you have the appearance. Or you can fake it. Besides, you might become one of Inanna's favorites."

"Ah," he said, "I hear that's a dangerous thing to do. But, really, I haven't time to tarry. I must be going."

"If you don't quit this life of thievery, Shugat-Nergal," I warned him, "I'll eventually catch you with the goods."

He laughed. "I don't think so," he replied. "But we'll see, Denisha, won't we?"

Then before I realized what was happening, he grabbed me by the arms and held me to him while he kissed me on the mouth. Pushing me away, he turned, waved goodbye and quickly disappeared into the crowd that filled the marketplace.

I felt embarrassed and put my hand to my throat. Damn! It was gone! That phony son of a bitch. He had snatched my necklace with my personal seal. For a moment, I thought about chasing him so I could scratch his eyes out when I caught him.

But then I thought better of it. My time will come.

The End

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About this capture

James W. Bell's
Ancient Sumeria
"In the Days when Gods Walked
Upon the Face of the Earth"
 Denisha and
 the Thief of Uruk

A story about Ancient Sumer

by James W. Bell © 2001

I knew he was going to test me.

Shugat-Nergal's not the type of thief to take anything lying down. He wasn't about to let a newly-appointed watcher from the Karum – especially a woman like me - interfere with his activities without putting me to the test.

It started this morning. A little boy about six or seven years old came running up the outside stairs to the roof where I slept. He poked me in the side and said, "Miss Denisha."

I turned over and opened one eye. It was still the dark gray of early dawn but I could see the boy had already put his loincloth on. "Yes?"

"Master Shugat-Nergal. He sent me to give you this and tell you a message." The boy held out a small envelope woven out of reed fiber.

I sat up, took the envelope from him and untied it. Inside I saw my necklace and personal seal. "What did he ask you to tell me?" I asked the boy.

I think I frightened him because he immediately backed off and then started reciting rapidly while staring down at his feet. "Master Shugat said tell you there will be action today at the marketplace at noon sharp." The boy finished with a sigh of relief.

"That arrogant bastard!" I cried out and heard the patter of bare feet running down the outside stairs. I looked up to see the boy was gone. "Bless Bes," I swore to myself and promised myself not to curse in front of little boys again.

I couldn't bring myself to touch my poor necklace after Shugat had fondled it with his

dirty hands. So I left it in the envelope, retied it and tucked it away in my moneybag.

>>

I made use of the slop pot and then hurried downstairs for a quick breakfast. Mulata, my landlady, treats me like a mother. She'd hardly spoken to me since I got appointed watcher by the Karum. "It's still a shame," she told me as I came in the doorway.

"Anything to eat?" I asked brightly.

"Groats. A little beer. Are you watching again today?"

"Yes," I said and went to the jars on the windowsill. I cupped my right hand, poured some groats into it from one jar and a little beer from another. I swilled it around in my cupped hand with my finger until it became paste and then put it to my mouth and gulped it down. "Great groats," I said.

"Humph!" Mulata grumped. "It's you who should be staying home and roasting them—not me."

"Thanks," I told her. Then, before going out the door, I left her a gift of a trinket on the window sill, worth at least six shekels of copper.

"Where are you going?" she called after me.

"To the marketplace," I answered. "The Thief of Uruk sent a little boy this morning to inform me he's pulling a job there at noon."

"I should have known!" Mulata shouted back. "You've started chasing men!"

Distracted by my landlady's shouting, I almost tripped when I stepped outside because the street level was a good two fingers higher than the floor of her old house. Like I'd already told her, it was time to knock down walls and build a new one. That's the best part about houses built of sun-baked mud brick. When the old walls come down, they are stomped into rubble and given a good wetting. That makes an excellent floor on which to erect a new house. It also ensures the new floor is higher than the street.

>>

I walked down to the quay on the riverfront. The Karum building sat at the north end of the quay and it wasn't all that impressive, a small cube built of sun-baked brick, much like Mulata's old house or most other houses in Uruk—not at all distinguished or noteworthy. But traders, wealthy as they are, learned long ago it's safer not to be

noticed overly much.

The Karum door was open so I walked in. Mashad was the only one there. “Hello, Denisha. What can we do for you today?”

“I’m going to have a problem today.”

He furrowed his brow at me. “Going to have?”

“You know I’m the new watcher in the city marketplace?”

Mashad ground his teeth. I sensed his regret at my appointment. “I’ve heard. So?”

“Shugat-Nergal’s planning a robbery in the marketplace today ... at high noon.”

“Are you some type of a fortune teller?”

“No, not me. It’s Shugat. He’s bragging. Sent a little boy to my home this morning to tell me his plan.”

Mashad eyed me cynically. “So,” he said in a tone of voice that implied he might be wondering if there were something between Shugat and me.

I intentionally cursed Shugat out loud. “That bastard is challenging me,” I said. “The Uruk Marketplace is huge. And Shugat can recognize me. He’ll pull off the robbery somewhere while I’m not close by. I’m not going to be able to stop it.”

“I’m glad you admit it.”

I hissed at Mashad. “But I’ll catch him anyways.”

He laughed out loud. “How?”

“Chase him if I have to. Run the bastard down.”

“Are you up to it?”

“Look,” I said and went into my Ishtar pose. “I’m in great shape. So is Shugat. He’s also a master at disguise. And quick— like a magician. I hope I’ll be able to track him.”

“Well, what are you expecting me to do about it?” Mashad asked.

“I hear there’s a special dog the Karum uses. One that can track a criminal by smell.”

“That’s so. We have such a dog here.”

“I’d like to borrow the animal for a few hours.”

Mashad acted as if I’d struck him. “Who do you think you are? Besides, you’d need something that had the criminal’s scent on it.”

I remembered my necklace tucked in the envelope in my moneybag. “Listen, I’m watcher for the Karum at the Uruk Market. My reputation - and the Karum’s - is at stake.”

He let out a sigh. “Really.”

“It will only be till after lunch,” I told him. “I’ll bring the dog back myself. I’ll have caught Shugat-Nergal by then. Everybody will have their reputation saved and you’ll probably receive a commendation for your part. Perhaps a few shekels as a bonus.”

I saw his eyes waver just before he gave in. “All right, Denisha. The dog’s name is Dunnu. We keep him out back.”

>>

I took the necklace out of the envelope and let Dunnu get a good sniff. Then we left for the marketplace.

Just as the sun reached its apex, I heard a man’s voice behind me call my name. I turned around and glimpsed Shugat-Nergal at some distance. He held up a handful of necklaces, waved them in the air at me and laughed. “See?” he shouted at me.

I could not believe his gall. I tugged at Dunnu’s leash, pointed at Shugat and told him, “Go!” The dog took off after the thief with me in tow. Of course, Shugat had already popped down one of the side streets.

Dunnu apparently picked up Shugat’s scent because he began yelping and racing ahead. I gave him his head and tried to keep up with him. Down the lane we went and then back up another road only to wind up on yet another side street.

Finally, we came to the stall of a baker of bread, an old woman in a shawl who sat on a stool behind a clay oven atop a stand. She pulled a strip of flatbread off the top of the oven and waved it in the air. “Hot bread,” she called out in a shrill voice from under the hood of her shawl.

Dunnu sniffed and stopped directly in front of her, sitting down on his haunches. “Would you buy a piece of bread from an old widow?” the hag asked me.

I looked at Dunnu and tugged at his leash. He wouldn't move. I turned to the old woman and squinted my eyes at her. "I don't think you're a woman," I said.

She gasped and clasped her shawl tightly around her. "I've never heard the like!" she said. "I hardly know what to say."

"Admit it!" I challenged her. "You're Shugat-Nergal."

She leaned back on the stool and looked at me from under her shawl like I was mad. "I'll call the watch - "

I couldn't help but grin. "Go ahead."

She tried to get up from the stool and I moved to help her. "Don't touch me!" she screeched and stepped back. She tripped on the hem of her shawl and fell backwards. The bottom of her shawl was flung up, exposing a pair of especially hairy legs.

I pointedly stared down at the ugly legs. "Those legs look remarkably like the legs of Shugat-Nergal," I said.

A voice spoke again from the hood, only this time it was a Shugat's voice. "You are truly an exceptional watcher, Denisha-Ishtar. However did you track me?"

I pointed at Dunnu. "My canine friend. He tracks criminals by scent," I said. "I borrowed him from the Karum."

"By scent?" Shugat asked. "Where did you get my scent?"

"Off the necklace you had the little boy return to me this morning." I took the little woven envelope out of my moneybag and waved it in the air above him.

He nodded, got up and took off the shawl. "Well," he said, "that's the thanks I get for trying to be nice to you."

"Nice you say? You shouldn't have taken my necklace in the first place. You know you're a thief, Shugat. You're going to get what you deserve."

His face saddened. "Alas," he sighed. "I guess you'll have to arrest me and take me back to the scene of the crime."

I suddenly realized he was making it too easy. A master thief like Shugat-Nergal giving in like this? I sensed a trap. "I'm asking you to show me where you got these necklaces."